UNITY, FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM

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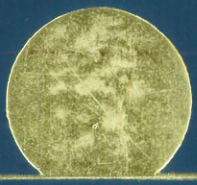

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PREFACE

I have selected for this book, from among Arab ideological and political issues, what I considered to be of interest to the foreign reader. And since the aims of the contemporary Arab revolution, in my opinion, can be summarized as problems related to unity, freedom and socialism, I have discussed in the first three chapters the connection between these aims, the theoretical relation between them and how they are complementary and form three aspects of a single aim—namely the realization of an Arab renaissance encompassing all aspects of Arab life. However, in Chapter Four, I have discussed military coups d'etats and their far-reaching effects and repercussions, not only in the Arab states, but also in the Third World. I have discussed their nature, justifications and negative effects in democracy and dealt with the progressive popular organizations.

In Chapter Five I dealt with the main political events during the two-year period preceding the October 1973 war, particularly those related to Arab guerilla activities, the nationalization of the oil industry and the use of Arab oil and funds as a weapon in the battle against Zionism and imperialism, as well as Iranian expansionist ambitions in the Arabian Gulf. I also discussed some of the plans aimed at Arab unity such as the tripartite federation between Egypt, Syria and Libya, King Hussein's plan for establishing a united Arab kingdom and the Iraqi gov-

ernment's proposal for the establishment of an effective union between Egypt, Syria and Iraq and any other Arab progressive state. I also mentioned the unity agreement between North and South Yemen and other national issues.

As for the last chapter – Chapter Six – I discussed in it the question of Arab unity within the framework of social democracy and presented opinions and comments on its present situation and future as gained through experience and active participation.

These topics have been related from a point of view affected by the ideologies of the Arab Ba'th (Renaissance) Socialist Party and its experiences. At the same time they depend on objectivity and have been drawn from actual experience. I therefore hope that they contain what the reader seeks and what may benefit him and satisfies his desire to get acquainted with some of the vital issues affecting the Arab nation.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF UNITY FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM

When revolutionary forces, whether in power or in opposition, work and struggle out of their conviction and belief in the necessity of maintaining a relationship between unity, freedom and socialism, they not only ensure the support of the masses and their revolutionary momentum but also avoid undue excesses and deviation in the progress of the revolution and protect themselves against repeated pitfalls and setbacks. In other words, the basic guarantee for the continued growth and maturity of the revolution and for preventing it from sliding into deadly deviations or undergoing setbacks that deter its resolve and determination lies in maintaining a correlation and interrelation of the aforementioned aims. Any attention paid to one of these aims while neglecting or ignoring the others will necessarily lead to a kind of deviation or setback that will be harmful to the revolution and hinder its progress.

Anyone, who traces the history of the Arab struggle in modern times, particularly, the history of the political movements in the period that followed the First World War and the domination of the Arab countries by Western imperialism, will notice that the aims and slogans of the struggle were concentrated on the evacuation of the colonialists and the realization of freedom and independence.

And if this would have led naturally to the removal of a basic obstacle in the way of unity and socialism, these two aims were not presented as slogans for winning the support of the masses and instigating them to struggle for the achievement of these aims in the clear manner that we see today. And if we set aside the traditional political parties, which are of a regional nature and have aims that do not go beyond the assumption of power and the introduction of internal reform, and look for example at political movements whose activities and effects encompass several states and which have tried to follow a specific ideology, it would become easy for us to visualize the overall picture that reflects the aims of the Arab revolution, the various stages of its development and its points of weaknesses and shortcomings. The Communist parties in the Arab world as a result of their dependence on Marxist principles and the subsequent importance given by them to socialist principles, had neglected the call for Arab unity which in their opinion was unrealistic, raised suspicions and served the interests of the reactionary bourgeoisie class. At the same time we notice that the Arab Nationalist Movement gave special importance to unity and freedom and neglected for a long time the socialist aspect maintaining the slogan "Unity, Freedom and Revenge".

As for the existing regime in Egypt, it did not have, when it came to power and for the whole of the first two years, any specific ideology but general hod basic prin- ciples or the slogan "union, organization and work" which expressed the military character of the revolution rather than a clear ideology.

As for the Arab Ba'th Socialist Movement, it was the only movement which was able from its inception to express with simplicity and depth the needs of the Arab nation, at this historical stage, by stressing the aims of the revolution – unity, freedom and socialism – and considering all three aims as being completely interrelated. In my opinion, this question of interrelation, or perhaps I may dare say this theory of interrelation, constitutes in its simplicity, the fundamental characteristics of the Ba'th movement and the strength of its ideology. In addition, it defines the method for the realization of these aims by way of revolution, popular struggle and the pursuit of moral principles which require honesty, truth and frankness with the people.

In view of their early belief in these aims and methods, the first Ba'thists were ridiculed and accused of idealism, phantasy and impracticality. But as the years went by, the experiences of the struggle have shown more and more that what the Ba'th Party advocated has been the best expression of the aims of the Arab revolution in this historical period. It is for this reason that other political movements in the Arab world were forced to amend their aims and slogans and to bring them closer more or less to the Ba'thist aims and slogans. The Communists, for example, changed their proclaimed theory of being strongly hostile to Arab unity and some of them began to consider themselves – if only for propaganda purposes – as among those demanding it and striving for it, while others claimed to be its supporters or at least not in opposition to it. The Arab Nationalists too, developed their views and in recent years started to pay special attention to the socialist aspect –

a matter that was unknown to them in earlier days.

As for Gamal Addul Nasser, he was well-known for his flexibility and capacity to develop and adopt himself to events and new ideas and for his ability to imitate and draw from experience. This of course is not a point against him, although it gives an indication of his instability with regard to any specific ideology. In any case, after many experiences which needed a great deal of change and amendment, he finally adopted the slogans of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party – namely, unity, freedom and socialism.

Anyway the main problem does not lie in the aims and slogans themselves, despite the fact that these require greater profundity and development in accordance with the development of ideological and social circumstances, but in the forces that either adopt or confront them. These forces, it appears, have not risen to the required standard of awareness with regard to these aims and slogans nor have a conviction in them or in the feeling of the historic responsibility towards them. Moreover, the professional revolutionaries, or those with a revolutionary disposition – who enjoy the feelings of sacrifice, giving and the pain they are subjected to for the sake of the revolution – remain a minority and their impact in relation to the majority of those professed revolutionaries is lost.

There is no doubt that those from among the progressive forces, who are in control of the means of propaganda and orientation as well as other organizations of power and suppression, shoulder a considerable burden in giving a living example of the misunderstanding and misapplication of these aims and slogans. In the event of the

undertaking of any step towards unity – which the people want to be a leading example embodying the hopes of the masses and the meaning of the desired unity whereby it becomes a focal point for attracting the forces of the revolution and it wins support in the whole of the Arab world – we find that in a short while such a step has been emptied of its democratic and socialist meaning. We will also find that those who believed in it and defended it, have been isolated or persecuted. In a similar manner, if measures aimed at achieving socialism are taken in an Arab state, such as the nationalization of the means of production, such measures are quickly labelled as a regional affair and are surrounded with acts of suppression, terrorism and the isolation of the masses in a manner that makes the people believe that such steps, from the point of view of their application, are closer to Fascism than socialism, and subsequently are not in the interest of the people but are aimed at strengthening the rulers' control of power. This means, in short that unity is liable to failure and setback if it does not embody socialist principles and is not based on democracy that ensure the participation of the masses. Moreover, all socialist measures lose their value and essence if they are meant to replace unity and democracy, or if they are adopted only in an effort to avoid unity and to restrict public freedom. In addition, political democracy can be labelled as false, if it is not accompanied with social democracy, i.e. socialism, and if it does not strengthen the struggle of the Arab masses for the realization of Arab unity. Hence, regional socialism, from our point of view, remains ineffective and amputated, and without democracy will be transformed into a kind of Fascism. Unity is therefore the natural framework within which socialism can be fulfilled and can produce the re-

quired results, while democracy is the proper atmosphere in which talent and potentialities can grow and which enables the masses – the instruments of the revolution – to achieve unity and socialism.

But before we discuss and expound these ideas, we must proceed to explain carefully the meaning behind our stressing the need for relating the three aims, just in case what we mean is taken literally or misunderstood. It is self-evident that these major aims cannot be realized all at once but through prolonged struggle, costly sacrifice as well as experience and practice and what the latter entails of right and wrong, success and failure as well as progress and retrogression. Related to this self-evident truth is the fact that we should not reject the partial realization of any of these aims, when such realization is possible, on the pretext that all these aims are interrelated or on any other pretext. Moreover, the revolutionary forces at a particular stage, may go a long way towards the achievement of Arab unity while at the same time they may lag behind with regard to the realization of freedom and socialism. On the other hand, the opposite may occur – as some states may take basic steps aimed towards socialism but are subjected to serious setbacks with regard to unity and democracy. In other words, if any state is able to get rid of feudalism and capitalism through nationalization and the pursuit of socialist principles, it should do so unhesitatingly and must not wait for the development of similar economic and political circumstances in other states that would make possible the adoption of socialist measures by them. However, if the socialist measures taken by such a state stem from regional considerations and those responsible do not envisage the expansion of this socialism and are not truly

convinced that it is stronger and more beneficial if it falls within the framework of Arab unity, they will thus build the economic life in the state on the basis of self-sufficiency, regional interests and all that may strengthen their hold on power instead of keeping the question of economic integration as a basic aim which they strive to achieve. Hence, their measures consolidate regional conditions and strengthen the roots of disunity instead of weakening such disunity or uprooting it. Thus, if we categorically say that any step towards socialism undertaken within a regional context is of no use whatsoever, this will undermine the possibility of socialist progress. since what may not be wholly achieved must not be wholly abandoned and the argument that there should not be any socialism except on a pan-Arab level becomes similar to the argument of those advocating total Arab unity so as to prevent the realization of any possible steps towards the unity of two or more states. In this case the demand for the achievement of the major aim, which is not possible at a particular stage, becomes a matter of making it impossible to achieve or covering up intended opposition to what may be realized at that particular stage.

As for the aim of unity, the experiences of Syria and Egypt in this regard have provided us with an eloquent lesson and clear proof of the soundness of what we advocate. If the authorities had not delayed the socialist decisions until the last days of the union and had not the union been established on a system dependent on the president himself, bureaucracy, the intelligence services and the abolishment of the role of the people and their organized revolutionary leaders, or in other words if socialism had not been ignored and democracy strangled in the first

experiment of unity in modern times, the secessionists would not have been able to dismantle the unity as easily as they did in 1961.

Briefly we can say that our stressing of the interrelation of unity, freedom and democracy is useful in avoiding mistakes and faults in the progress of the revolution, a matter which requires a revision of positions and behaviour patterns, and permits efforts to be concentrated in a manner that prevents the complication of errors and deviations and avoids a situation where anyone of these aims would replace the other or would be in opposition to them.

Thus it appears that the permanent awareness of this theoretical relation between unity, freedom and socialism is the guideline or light that determines the basic path of the revolution and prevents it from losing itself and falling victim to excesses and deviations.

There is also another fundamental aspect related to the manner in which the question of the interrelation of these three aims is presented. When the question is put forward on the basis of whether socialism can theoretically be realized or not, or whether unity or socialism is possible without democracy or not, this might lead to misleading arguments from which it would be difficult to learn the final truth. It is not difficult to present various examples taken from the history of peoples which show that socialism for example could be applied in small countries such as Yugoslavia, Cuba and Albania This negates the saying that the question of the vast expanse of land with large economic and human possibilities as necessary conditions for the realization of socialism.

With regard to unity it can also be said that there are many examples in history which affirm that it is possible to establish national unions not on the basis of socialism combined with democracy such as the German and Italian unity in the last century or the Hashemite federation between Jordan and Iraq in 1958 and even the unity experiment between Syria and Egypt which affirms this argument to a large extent.

It is for this reason that in our discussion we do not put forward the question of interrelation in an abstract manner, on the basis of whether or not it is possible to achieve each of these three aims alone, that is separately or in isolation from the other two, but on the basis that the objective circumstances and economic social conditions of the Arab nation in this particular historical stage made it imperative that this interrelation should exist for it would ensure the safety of the revolution and its success, and protect it from destructive setbacks and dangerous deviations. In this context Michel 'Aflaq said in 1949: "The Arab Ba'th became aware of the real national aims when it combined them in these principles and realized that they constituted a complete unit. Work towards unity is a natural necessity for the Arabs to safeguard their future, as well as efforts towards freedom – for what is the value of unity if it did not include a free people who are aware of their rights and capable of exercising them... The third principle, socialism, is that there should be at this stage an industrious free people – destined to live and whose individuals are afforded great opportunities so that their strength and potentialities become apparent without any artificial obstacles imposed by one class upon another and without internal differences. It is then that the Arabs

will give forth their great strength and their society will be destined to remain and to defend itself..."

'Aflaq then goes on to say: "We realize that these three aims are complementary and are not in opposition to one another and moreover are harmoniously unified, each supporting and paving the way for the other; but they have become divided and tangled at the hands of political factions which are suspect in their sincerity and connections. Because those who advocate unity, fight freedom and socialism and the opposite is also true."(1)

In the light of these two points relating to the meaning of the interrelation and the method of its presentation, we can go on to discuss the connection between socialism and democracy and the nature of their relationship and how the policies which claimed socialism have led to dealing blows at democracy and those who claimed the latter and neglected the former have led to deadly setbacks and fatal blows to the aims of the Arab revolution.

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(1) Quoted in *al-Ba'th* newspaper, No. 336 dated 29 December 1949.

CHAPTER TWO

DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL AIMS

Through a general unspecific view of the present existing regimes in the Arab world, we can classify them into two basic types: The first, which have been conventionally called in politics the reactionary or conservative regimes, are those connected politically and economically in one way or another with the West. Any socialist measures in these regimes are not only remote, but opposed and those who advocate them are persecuted. As for democracy within these regimes, it is the worst kind of Western democracy which is not only unable to eradicate the origins of class injustice but consecrates the authority of the ruling class and their exploitation of the other struggling sectors of society, who form the absolute majority of the people. Moreover, the freedom of the press and publication, and in some of them the establishment of political parties, and the exercising of voting rights once every few years, no longer has any meaning in the existing democratic life of these regimes, because all of these have become artificial practices at the hands of a minority, which is able through its ownership of funds and the means of production and control of state establishments to exploit these practices in their own interest emptying them of any democratic meaning and maintaining them as a mere semblance of democracy. There is no need to dwell for long on these regimes, because they are well exposed and their hostile

stand vis-à-vis the aims of the Arab revolution is clear and known.

The second type of regime are those that are known as the progressive regimes, or revolutionary regimes as the authorities in them insist on calling them. These then are the regimes that concern and interest us in this discussion since their governments claim that they are revolutionary and making their way on the road to socialism and the realization of the national aims.

However, our appreciation of the positive endeavours within these regimes must not blind us to their negative aspects which are harmful to the progress of the revolution. If we were to view these regimes in a manner relative to the conservative regimes, there would not be any problem and we would not hesitate to defend and support them as long as they remain far removed from any suspicious collusion against the national cause. However, when we look at the these regimes from the point of view of the interests and future of the revolution and when we compare them with revolutionary standards, we find ourselves compelled to make observations and positive criticism to expose their points of weakness and subsequently participate in finding suitable solutions to enable the Arab revolution to overcome the present crisis. We are certain that sincere positive criticism based on serious scientific analysis will undermine the forces of reaction and prevent them from exploiting such criticism. It is the only way to expose mistakes, to prevent their recurrence and to clarify the present situation which has shrouded the revolutionary forces and left them in a state of loss, anxiety and despair.

It is possible to say in general that the progressive

governments in the Arab homeland derive their power and control of authority from: (*i*) Confrontation of imperialism and reaction; (*ii*) adoption of progressive measures such as the promulgation of agrarian reform laws, the issue of nationalization decisions in the economic sector which previous bourgeois governments had failed to take and make attempts at planning, development and industrialization; (*iii*) dependence on the army, the bureaucratic organization and the strong machinery for suppression which these regimes employ; (*iv*) adoption of national revolutionary slogans relating to unity, liberation and socialism irrespective of their seriousness and capability of implementing such slogans.

However, events and experiences have begun to reveal, day by day, that the sources of such power are beginning to slacken and to be exhausted, and that the momentum which these governments had started with and which earned them the sympathy of the masses in the past, they can no longer sustain. Signs of fatigue and exhaustion are becoming obvious due to their erroneous concepts in dealing with the aims of the Arab revolution aimed at unity, freedom and socialism and their failure to pay attention to the simplest principles of the interrelation between these aims.

In any case, we do not intend to indulge in detailed criticism of any specific regime as much as we aim to criticize the general logic used by these regimes to deal with the aims of the revolution – a logic which characterizes all or some of them and which imparts to them their distinguishing reputation.

A just scientific study of the conditions existing in

the Arab progressive states, which came as a result of military coups d'etats, affirms that if democracy was a fraudulent lie under the conventional governments, it is under the progressive governments, nearer to being strangled and absent. It is painful to us that reality is such, and that certain progressives have resorted to falsehood, and the errors that accompanied the implementation of democracy during the reign of the reactionary and bourgeoisie regimes to justify the uprooting of democratic life, the creation of contradictions between democracy and socialism and in making the latter an alternative to the former. If the open attack on liberal democracy had led to the surpassing of its shortcomings while maintaining its advantages or to the establishment of a better form of democracy, such as a popular democracy, there would not be any scope for criticism or opposition. But when the reason for the attack is to present the necessary justifications to strengthen the regime which is characterized by either individualism, Fascism or military bureaucracy, the natural result of such an attack is to throw doubt on the usefulness of democracy and its ideology on the pretext of opposing its errors. This result reminds us of the result sought by the enemies of unity who used to attack the experiment of the union between Syria and Egypt, not out of an intention to rectify and correct matters but to keep away unity, to cast doubt on the principle and to belittle its ideology.

The bankruptcy of bourgeois democracy does not mean the bankruptcy of popular democracy. Does the latter have any actual existence under progressive regimes?

Popular democracy is based on the belief in the people

and the recognition of the right of the masses to participate in matters that concern them and are directly related to them whether political or economic. However, belief in the people and the recognition of their right to participate, must not remain simply as words or within the context of slogans intended for local consumption, to be exported abroad or for misrepresentation or as dope for the people. This belief has results which express either its truth or fraudulence, and its existence is confirmed or denied from the democratic behaviour, the stands and examples that are established by those responsible in the states they govern.

It is not only important that there should be labor and trade unions, but what is important is to know the extent to which such unions enjoy independence and freedom and whether their elections are held without the pressure and interference of the intelligence services and without the latter's promises and threats. Also whether the leaders of such unions truly represent the working class or do they represent the desires of the authorities and implement their orders and directives more than the wishes of the workers and their interests. Moreover, do the workers have the right to strike as an effective weapon that they use to defend their rights, or has such a right been taken away from them? And in the event the workers – who are the instruments and purpose of the revolution and the supporters and defenders of socialism – wish to strike in protest against a political stand or for an economic demand, are their leaders safe from prosecution, imprisonment and torture? Will some of them be

saved from death by the firing squad? What is the value of the public affirmation that the struggling masses are the means and purpose of the revolution, when in fact they are isolated from actual participation in political and economic affairs while those in authority speak in their name, act on their behalf, practice guardianship over them and dictate from above everything that concerns them and their future in the form of decisions and orders and planned directives which leave no room for negotiations or discussion?

Where are the councils of the workers and peasants, through which they could supervise, direct, control, express their views and participate in the political, economic, administrative and organizational affairs with the circle of their endeavours and production?

It is not important to have the provisions incorporated in constitutions guaranteeing individual and public freedoms and safeguarding the dignity of nationals, nor is it important that these provisions should be varied and stipulated more than once. But what is important is the behavioral pattern and method of implementation. For when the protection of the revolution is used as a pretext to override these provisions, resort is made to arbitrary arrests and persecution, violating dignities, utilizing the ugliest forms of violence and injustice, pursuing terror and oppression as well as the savage torture of those who oppose or criticize, even if they were progressives. When such behavior becomes a permanent pattern and commonplace practice, as is the case with the rulers of Syria we should not be surprised if the people view their government as a terroristic, overpowering, Fascist regime which has no connec-

tion whatsoever with democracy. We should also not be surprised if the people reject and have an aversion to the slogans of such a regime and they feel bitter even with the milk and honey which has been presented to them through socialism, when such Fascist methods are applied.

From the political democracy aspect, the criticism levelled against the progressive regimes is not only based on the fact that the state monopolizes the propaganda, public information and publishing media, but also imposes on such media strict controls which prevent any opposition to or criticism of the positions and basic undertakings of those responsible even out of reasons of sincerity or reform. Moreover, criticism against these regimes with regard to their hostile stand vis-à-vis partisanship and political parties is not restricted to the fact that they do not differentiate between the good parties and the bad, using the same yardstick for all and putting the good on the same footing as the bad, nor due to the fact that they adopt the principle of a single party or political movement – since the latter is possible and exists in the socialist countries and some developing states – but because these regimes had adopted movements that had existed. or had established themselves and prevented them from pursuing their work and activities and left them unfunctional and paralyzed by not allowing them to take decisions with regard to important matters related to the political and economic fields and by converting their members into slogan-shouting and applauding crowds, to express loyalty and support at ceremonies, celebrations and occasions called for and recommended by the state.

In this case we should not be surprised if a crisis or crises are precipitated among the educated class or others

who, as soon as they declare their desire to participate in the building of a socialist democratic society, find themselves facing closed doors, a suppressed atmosphere and restrictions on freedom of action and expression. They thus retract full of disappointment and despair. Some may leave the country and immigrate in pursuit of free productive work while others stay at home, helpless, except for their grumbling and critical whispers in the ears of their relatives and trusted friends.

If we can, therefore, imagine the extent of the great loss for the Arab nation and its revolution arising from the stifling of the many talents and capabilities and the wasting of abundant potentialities, we will realize the enormity of the responsibilitiy for the absence of democracy.

What we have mentioned with regard to the absence or disfigurement of democracy in the progressive regimes poses the question: Why and when is democracy subjected to such a situation? Although it is not possible for us to know all the reasons and factors, we can at least point out some basic and general reasons including the following:

(1) When the rulers disbelieve the masses and mistrust their capabilities and the usefulness of their participation in directing the political and economic affairs of the state.

(2) When the rulers' ideological and political horizons become restricted and their self-esteem reaches a level of conceit and they believe that they are truly and clearly expressing the aims of the masses and are fit to represent them and work on their behalf.

(3) When the forces that put the rulers in power and which lend them support are not the forces of the people but those of the army, organizations of suppression and bureaucratic establishments.

(4) When popular organizations and the vanguards of the revolution are unable to establish their presence and to impose their opinions and concepts by continuing their endeavours and the struggle, despite the suppression and persecution to which they are subjected.

There is a particular manifestation – which has become prominent and synonymous or resulting from the absence of democracy, and in view of its importance we must pause for a while to discuss its nature and justifications. The manifestation we mean, is that of bodily and moral torture, in a most savage and inhuman way bringing the victim near to death and perpetrated not only against conspirators, traitors and criminals but against political opponents comprising progressives and revolutionary strugglers – a matter which affirms a Machiavellian mentality which considers that the end justifies the means and which permits the rulers to resort to all ways and means – even if such means are savage and immoral – to maintain their authority and power. If the rulers, who are in possession of the large-scale means of propaganda, publication and information, material incentives, as well as the positions in, and strength of, the state establishments, fear despite all this the opposition of individuals or bodies whose members have only the spoken word and some publications which they distribute within a restricted circle, then what sort of self-confidence and strength of power do these rulers possess? And how can they truly express the aims

of the masses, which they talk so much about? Are they then affected by the behavioral pattern of the dictatorial regimes which have been able to survive for long peroids through the use of force or violence? Or are they behaving as guardians, a selected few who see themselves more capable to realize the aims of the politically, socially and ideologically underdeveloped masses, who are unable to achieve their own interests, and to put an end to the propaganda of opportunists and to prevent such propaganda from affecting the masses? Isn't this then the logic of the selected few which give themselves the right to use the ugliest and most repulsive methods of torture on the pretext of defending the people's interests and protecting their revolutionary aims? Is torture from their point of view, permissible and effective in defending unity, freedom and socialism or any other slogans? And is the torture of the political opposition, even if they are progressives, a result of the erroneous concepts and principles of the rulers or the result of the underdeveloped social, economic and educational standards in the Arab world? Or is it, as one Arab Marxist has stated, the rotten fruit of societies that are divided into various classes?* All or most of these reasons might have an effect on this, but with regard to the Marxist interpretation, it can be said that in certain capitalist countries, such as Switzerland, England and the Scandinavian countries, class distinctions are still existent but we do not find in these countries one-tenth of the methods of terror, violence and torture of the opposition employed by both the conservative and progressive Arab governments alike. Also, if we put aside the early stages of the Stalin regime, during which the Soviet Union was

(*) "*Al-'Usf* (Injustice)" — Bashir Haj 'Ali, p. 35.

passing through a delicate and difficult stage and the second stage of his rule during which the regime, as confirmed by the Communists, had become the representative of the struggling class and the influence of the other influencial anti-revolutionary classes had been crushed, we can say that in the final stages of Stalin's rule, the use of methods of suppression and torture as well as the persecution of those opposing his rule, were the most savage and violent even against those who were members of the Party who had a long record in the service of the revolution.

There is no doubt that the persecution and torture of political opponents in the Soviet Union has been reduced following the 20th conference of the Soviet Communist party which condemned Stalin's excessiveness in the use of violence and force. Perhaps one of the positive initiatives of this conference was the fact that it wanted to put an end or at least to reduce the Stalinist techniques in the application of terrorism, to establish that democracy could go hand in hand with socialism and that there was need to sacrifice several generations to erase the bureauctraic state and its establishments so as to permit those who lived through this phase to enjoy the comforts of democracy and the paradise of socialism.

After World War I and with the appearance of Nazism and Fascism, certain political concepts and slogans had spread and became popular, such as "the just despot", "the heroic leader", or "the inspired leader" – all of which embodied the nation's aspirations and were supposed to lead it along the path of sovereignty and glory. Also there appeared the concept of the necessity for the use of force and violence in the implementation of socialism.

There is no need to point out that the slogans "the just despot" and "the inspired heroic leader" have now faded and disappeared in this age as a result of the peoples' movements and revolutions, and before popular organisations, led by collective leaderships that interact with, and draw their strength from, the masses and are thus able to play a major role in the current of events and the development of society.

But the slogan which, according to those who circulate it, states that the application of socialism requires the utilization of force and violence, needs to be discussed so as to expose it and show the errors and delusions incorporated in it. Perhaps the strength of this slogan was derived from two basic sources: the first from the theory which prevailed prior to the 20th conference of the Soviet Communist party which stated that the Red revolution was the only way to achieve socialism; and the second the method of terror and violence employed by Stalin in the implementation of socialism.

The 20th conference, which took into account the numerous revolutionary examples in the world, came out with a fundamental amendment to the method for the realization of socialism, when it acknowledged that socialism can be achieved in more ways than one and through peaceful means. The conference which also was aware of the harm inflicted on Soviet society by these Stalinist methods and the dangers arising from their continuous use, took the initiative to clearly censure and condemn them.

It is true that the feudalist and capitalist classes do not relinquish their privileges and whatever they own of the

means of production except by force or violence or only after they are exposed to terror and fear. However, if it is permissible to use this method in the early stages, or when implementation of socialism is started or at any time when sabotage attempts are made against socialist measures, it is not permissible to continue in this method ever after thereby allowing exceptional circumstances to become permanent, transitory conditions to continue and extraordinary measures to become a fixed rule – affecting the conduct of those responsible and dictating their positions. We are certain that those rulers with an inclination towards individualism, who look forward to a greater concentration of power in their hands, and who have continued to rule single-handed and who have became used to adopting nationalist slogans and creating contradictions between such slogans – these rulers will not pay any attention to the basic developments and fundamental amendments in the revolution's concepts introduced by the experiences of the struggle of the masses and the various liberation movements in all parts of the world. These developments and amendments, cut down the authority of individuals and bureaucratic establishments in the interest of popular democracy and strengthen the authority of the masses and their revolutionary organizations.

There is no doubt that widening the scope of individual freedoms and the freedom of criticism, opposition and publication may create confusion, and controversies and often contradictory currents within the socialist society whose unity is sought and even stregthened. We had previously censured bureaucratic democracy and suggested popular democracy which prevents sabotage by feudalists, capitalists, opportunists and lackeys, prohibits earnings in

the name of freedom, the press and publications and of anything else related thereto and avoids the establishment of popular organizations which are hostile to socialism and Arab unity.

Pursuing matters on the basis of this logic is one thing, and using the pretext of confusion in throught and the breakdown of the socialist society to destroy democracy including its concepts and spirit, is another. If it were permissible for us to put forward the issue on the basis of a preference between the existence of a lax democracy and the dangers that may ensue from it or its non-existence we would prefer that it should exist since its benefits and advantages are more numerous than its pitfalls and evils.

In short, rulers must be sincere to socialism and should strive to achieve it with all seriousness and vigor. The weakness of class and political awareness among the masses, the fear of opposition even if it were constructive and of confusion among the people as a result of freedom and any other reason, must not be used as a pretext to justify the persecution of progressives, the exercise of terror and dictatorship and prohibiting the masses and their revolutionary vanguards from pursuing organized activity and work on a voluntary basis.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY FOR UNITY

After having discussed the vital relationship between democracy and socialism and having clarified the erroneous idea relating socialism to violence and dictatorships, we will here try to explain that the desired unity will not be able to stand fast in the face of its many enemies, particularly its obstinate adversaries, and that the potentialities and rich talents of the Arab nation will not emerge under Arab unity unless such unity encompasses socialism and democracy.

The idea of unity is synonymous to the existence of the Arab nation and has been in its conscience ever since it was subjected to partitions and divisions as a result of complicated historical circumstances. There is no political movement or party that can claim the inception and renaissance of Arab unity from nothing. If certain Arab writers and thinkers have pointed to and preached about Arab unity since the beginning of this century, this has been a reaction to the Turkization policy pursued by the Turks regardless of Arab nationalist feelings or a result of a yearning to relive past Arab glory, when the Arabs formed a single state from the Atlantic to the Gulf. It was natural that under those past circumstances, such mentions and writings were unable to create an organized and aware popular movement that would strive to achieve unity on a clear base. In the early forties, there appeared

an Arab political movement which believed in Arab unity called "The National Work League". But the activities of this movement did not go beyond certain Arab countries, particularly Syria and Lebanon. The movement did not put forward the scientific and modern concept of unity and it did not take into account the socialist and democratic aspects of it. For this and other reasons, the movement failed and very quickly disappeared. In contrast, the political movements which concentrated on socialism without unity, such as the Communist parties in the Arab world, have not been able to win the support of the Arab masses despite the fact that these parties were established in the early days and depended on precise organization, Marxist principles and their clear ideology, in addition to the support they received from the Soviet Union and the Socialist Bloc.

We believe that the aims of the Ba'th movement and its basic precepts remain true and could be used – after their development and expansion – as a theoretical guide for any revolutionary movement which aims to follow up on the national struggle and political activity in this historical phase of the life of the Arab nation. If the Ba'th Party did not succeed as was expected after taking over the reigns of power in Syria and Iraq in 1963* and was

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* The short period of the new regime in Iraq which followed 17 July 1968 has shown that the authorities there have kept before their eyes the experiences and harsh lessons of the past and try to benefit from them and to handle matters and the affairs of state wisely and rationally.

(The many progressive achievements undertaken by the 17 July revolution culminating in the nationalization of the monopolistic oil companies support the truth and accuracy of the above-mentioned note.)

not able to put forward adequate practical evidence of the truth of these aims and concepts, it was because the Party had not attained in its organization, leadership and structure, the standards dictated by its very aims and concepts. In other words, the Party's instruments were not equitable to the aims it had decided to uphold and thus it suffered under their weight. Just as the failure of a political movement in practice and the assumption of power is not an adequate proof of the failure of its ideology, its success in this sphere cannot also be considered as sufficient evidence of the truth of its ideology. Otherwise, the success of Nazism for a while would have been evidence of the truth of its ideology and concepts, and the success of Salazar in Portugal and his remaining in power for more than 35 years would also be evidence of the correctness of the ideology and concepts on which his autocratic regime was based.

In any case, if the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party has any favors in the service of unity, it is because it had concentrated on its importance, necessity and revolutionary values and for bringing it down from the world of wishful thinking and abstract writings to the realities of the organized, practical struggle, and for imparting to it its democratic socialist content which has made it a popular demand and a basic aim of the working class and related to their interests and future. In this context Prof. Michel 'Aflaq has stated: "When we related Arab unity to socialism, we were not being arbitrary or extemporary, but we found that that was the only way by which unity in our lives would become a living moving reality to be demanded by every worker when such a worker demands his bread, or an increase in his wages or medicine for his

children and when every poor and oppressed peasant demands the restoration of his right to what he produces and the lifting of the injustices and enslavement from his shoulders. Thus we made of Arab unity a real living demand which enters the life of every individual of the Arab people, the circumstances of their daily living and the simplest thing in their lives, namely their material needs".*

However, the most valuable thing that socialism can achieve is not raising the material standards of the Arab people, despite its importance, but the realization of equal opportunities among individuals, the removal of class exploitation and providing a natural opportunity for the emergence of talent and genius which will push forth the renaissance to the farthest possible extent, raise the standard of the ideological and scientific output to that of the advanced nations and what is commensurate with the ambitions of the Arab nation as well as its national and humane aspirations. However, the needed socialism will not produce what is anticipated from it unless it is achieved at the pan-Arab level in a well-studied and rational manner without improvisation or imitation. It is here that the theoretical relationship between unity, freedom and socialism becomes apparent and most clear and the three aims intertwine to become three sides to one body or one truth. Some may think that our rejection of socialism on a regional basis and our demand that it should be applied at the pan-Arab level are based on national emotionalism or merely an effort to abide by the national slogan which

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* 'Aflaq, Michel, *Fi Sabil al-Ba'th* (For the Ba'th), 3rd ed., Dar al-Tali'ah, 1963 (p. 219).

makes the Arab homeland an economic and political unit. They also believe that the realization of socialism is possible at the regional level, and they put forward practical proof of its benefits which in turn constitutes a factor that attracts and entices other states to lean towards socialism, strengthens the struggle of the working class and helps it acquire new gains in this regard. They also believe that the objective principles for the establishment of a strong unity among the Arab states are to set up progressive regimes in these states which are similar to one another in their economic and political conditions and closely related in their socialist outlook.

It is true that any socialist step which is possible to achieve at the regional level, will serve the cause of unity and pave the way before it, and it is also true that when economic and political conditions in the Arab states are closely similar, the establishment of unity is easier and simpler and its steadfastness is stronger and more durable. But all this presupposes that the socialist measures are undertaken within the framework of clear national concepts, otherwise they become an aim in themselves and a means to support those regimes and governments which benefit from the existing divisions. Moreover, they would be seen as an alternative to unity, or some form of bribery to silence demands for unity and democracy.

Thus, those who advocate the implementation of socialism step by step are liable to be dragged into dangerous pitfalls related to regional affairs. Perhaps the situation in certain Arab countries which have pursued the socialist path confirms these doubts and fears and singles out the aforementioned cautions. The ordinary citizens as well

as those who are well read, are wondering these days as to what prevents the undertaking of steps directed towards a union or federation – similar to the 17 April Charter – between those Arab states with similar policies and economic setups, if regional concepts and self-interest have not affected in an overwhelming manner the behaviour of the rulers of these states. The ordinary citizen is also asking whether the progressive forces are still capable of continuing on the road aimed at unity or have they been afflicted with revolutionary exhaustion after having restricted the activities of the masses and contained their revolutionary potential? He is also asking what is preventing the Arab governments from implementing with all speed, seriousness and sincerity certain basic and important steps directed towards unity, such as the Arab common market which is less difficult to implement than any other political step and is less likely to arouse the enemies of unity. In addition it does not lead to the destruction of the regional entities. Isn't it true that when the question of unity remains within the framework of slogans and promises it is evidence of the retrogression of the revolution and the ineffectiveness of the methods used in the service of the aims of the revolution? It is also true that too much talk about unity in speeches and declarations is no longer a factor for mobilization and the creation of an awareness as much as it is an admission of failure and a reminder of feelings of inadequacy.

Our admission that socialism is possible to achieve at the regional level and that any step taken in this direction serves, at the same time, the cause of unity and democracy and our recognition that a similarity of political and economic conditions facilitates the establishment of

anity and strengthens its steadfastness – all this, does not uttenuate the argument that the realization of socialism at the pan-Arab level is not only preferable to its achievement at the regional level, but is also more beneficial, more productive and of safer consequences. This goes back to the fact that the larger the area involved in an economic unity, the greater is the capacity to confront the international monopolies and the economic competition of the major powers. Political and economic independence from these states is also strengthened and there would be no need to obtain a large numbers of loans that are concluded under great financial stress that might lead to an appeasement of the lending states or to some form of economic dependence and subsequently to political dependence. We also think that no one can deny that a state of 100 million people is more capable of repelling imperialist pressures and providing liberties than some states or statelets operating alone and in a divided way each detached from the other. Moreover, the achievement of wide-ranging development and raising the standards of the Arab people to a level that makes them realize the value of socialism and its necessity and strengthens their adherence to its principles requires the establishment of heavy industries and subsequently a scientific technological revolution. This of course cannot be carried out within one Arab state, particularly if it is a small state such as Syria, or even a large state which lacks certain basic raw materials. However, it is possible to establish such industry within the framework of the whole Arab homeland where there is adequate capital, manpower and technical know-how, as well as various forms of raw materials particularly crude oil, cotton, phosphates and various minerals. In addition, heavy industry requires a considerably large consumer market

which would not be available within one state, and further still, such a state will not be able to find in markets outside the Arab world the facilities for expansion particularly when it cannot compete with the large-scale capitalist monopolies in African markets or in any other under-developed country and it cannot stand up to the pressures and conspiracies of imperialism.

Since we consider the working class as the mainstay of socialism and the vanguard of the forces protecting it, the existence of a healthy heavy industry is necessary for strengthening this class for broadening its bases. And heavy industry, as we have mentioned, cannot be established except at the pan-Arab level.

In any case at the present stage, there is no dire need to preach about the necessity of unity or to explain its advantages,* for its benefits and importance are not denied

* Twenty years ago, Arab nationalism — and Arab unity as a practical expression of Arab nationalism — required preaching and support because of the lack of national awareness among the masses in that period and the strength of the bourgeoisie governments which strongly adhered to and benefited from divisions, and because there existed at the time ideologies as well as regional and national organizations that denied and resisted unity, such as the Parti Populaire Syrien (PPS), those who advocated Pharaonic or Phoenician origins and those whose ideologies extended beyond the limits of the Arab homeland or Arab nationalism such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Communist parties. However, the growth of a national awareness today and the struggle for unity by the Arab Ba'th movement during the last 25 years and by other organizations such as the Arab Nationalistis as well as the concentration of the revolutionaries in Egypt after 1952 on Arab nationalism and the use of their vast propaganda media in this cause, has weakened the regional and national movements, and made of Arab nationalism a reality and of any dialogue on unity and practical projects a natural and ordinary affair.

except by those few persistent enemies of unity and those who are liable to sustain harm by its establishment. In addition those who advocate it are no longer looked upon as idealists deserving pity and compassion, particularly since unity has become a popular demand and an aim of the people.

The present stage is one involving the amendment, clarification and deepening of the ideology, concepts and practical foundations of unity as well as the adoption of practical slogans and federal projects, the mobilization of the masses and urging them to take part in the struggle and in applying pressure for the realization of these slogans and projects in steps and stages. It is from this that we are able to realize the great loss sustained by the forces of the Arab revolution as a result of the abrogation of the role of the masses and their organized vanguards and by preventing them from exercising the struggle for unity.

It is true that emotional enthusiasm played a major role in the establishment of the first experiment of unity between Egypt and Syria, but one cannot say that this very enthusiasm is also responsible for the setback that befell the experiment and the subsequent secession. This also must not lead us to misleading conclusions which some would like to circulate and emphasize such as the statement that the objective conditions for the establishment of the union were not at hand, and that it was premature... as well as other conclusions which exclude it or postpone it indefinitely.

On the other hand we must not interpret every opinion which urges careful study and patience for the establish-

ment of unity as a misleading opinion because the secession of 1961 has had its effects and in reality precipitated certain complexes and fears in the minds of those responsible and those who desire unity. Perhaps this is reflected in one of the provisions of the National Charter of the Arab Socialist Union in Egypt which states: Speeding up the various stages of development towards unity may leave behind – as has been proved from experience – economic and social shortcomings which are deployed by elements hostile to unity to strike at it from behind.*

If such fears do not affect the belief in the idea of unity or the determination to restore it, then they are acceptable and harmless. However, if the complaint regarding speeding up the stages of development towards unity is converted into some kind of desire to postpone it or to continue to fear its restoration, the issue is then put on a different level requiring discussion and remedies, since waiting for the overcoming of the economic and social shortcomings of Arab society might take a long time – perhaps too long. Then there are those who exclude unity on the pretext that they do not want it established on any emotional basis, but on well-studied and scientific principles and who are like others who urge its restoration in unsuitable circumstances for propaganda purposes as exemplified by the actions of the (regional) rulers of Damascus immediately following the June 1967 setback, when the Arab states had had no time to regain their breath, and who have and still place obstacles in the path of any

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* Khauli, Lutfi, *Dirasat Fi al Waqi' Al Mu'asir* (Studies in Contemporary Times) p. 243.

step towards unity suggested in suitable circumstances.*

Despite the fact that the establishment of the first experiment in unity in 1958 had given practical proof of the possibility of undertaking steps leading to unity and had put an end to pessimistic and hostile views regarding unity, which also considered its establishment at the time as impossible, the setback sustained by the experiment in 1961 and the subsequent secession has restored to those hostile and pessimistic elements a weapon which they employ as proof of their past claims. In fact the secession, through the shock and disappointment it imparted, has spread a new wave of despair and pessimism which in itself is an obstacle that did not exist before. However, there is an important basic difference between those who truely believe in unity, its concepts and struggle, and those who only understand it from the point of view of regional or personal interests or those who view it from the Arab and international political circumstances surrounding the Arab nation and who are consequently are not prepared to make any sacrifice or gamble for unity's sake.

This difference means that the first group have learnt from the mistakes of the unity experiment and try to correct

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* In May 1969, the Syrian regionalists demanded unity with Egypt which rejected it, and they rejected unity with Iraq which demanded it. (This nomenclature — regionalists — has been given to the rulers of Syria and those who remained with them from among the members of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party following their coup d'etat against the lawful national leadership of the Party on 23 February 1966, because their behaviour and actions were based on regional concepts despite their claim that they would continue to adopt the aims and slogans of the Ba'th Party).

and override these mistakes. Moreover they have not been deterred from continuing the struggle for unity, while the other group find for themselves pretexts and excuses to escape from any new measure in fear of the repetition of the setback and failure – a matter which affects the destiny and continuity of the government in the state they rule.

In fact, the greatest danger threatening the future of unity lies in the superficial political viewpoint which changes with changing regional circumstances and interests and which lacks belief and conviction as well as a clear ideology. The danger also lies in the understanding of unity in various forms and contradictions according to the various states and policies. In Syria we understand that it means an embodiment of Arab nationalism, in Egypt a solution to economic conditions, in Lebanon a reflection or instigation to sectarianism, and in the North African countries as equal to or on a par with African unity.

CHAPTER FOUR

MILITARY COUPS D'ETAT AND THEIR NEGATIVE EFFECTS

A. The Nature and Justifications of Military Coups d'Etat:

There are many who still pin their hopes on military coups d'etat and who believe that they can be converted into a true popular revolution, with all its effects and repercussions and which can realize its full aims. What in fact strengthens their belief is the weakness of the popular revolutionary organizations and the clear disability of the conventional regimes on the one hand and the undertaking of major positive steps by revolutionists on the other. However, coups d'etat have negative effects of great importance and danger, which create serious stumbling blocks in the path of the Arab revolution and precipitate major crises for it thus preventing it from pursuing the path to the ultimate end so as to realize the aims of the people for unity, freedom and socialism and to provide the minimum level for the interrelationship of these three aims. All military coups d'etat are characterized by the restriction of public freedoms and non-dependence on the struggling masses – who are the aim and instruments of the revolution. Moreover, they are characterized by the cancellation of the role of the masses and the exercise of guardianship over them, by dependence on the bureaucratic set-up, and restriction of the aims of the revolution

to the limits which enable those in power to retain their control of government in isolation from any participation by the masses and popular revolutionary movements.

Before discussing the role of the military revolutions which took place in the Arab world after the first war in Palestine and the effects of these revolutions on the present crisis of the Arab revolution, it is perhaps worthwhile mentioning three points:

Firstly, we have tried to draw our political opinions regarding this subject from our detailed knowledge of the undertakings of the coups d'etat in Syria and other Arab states while admitting that there exists major differences between one revolution and another from the point of view of their results, as well as their negative and positive aspects.

Secondly, when we criticize harshly the military, we actually mean the revolutionaries among them and not the military in general. Otherwise, we would be creating contradictions between them and the civilians at a time when we are most careful to weaken the artificial secondary contradictions rather than exacerbating them. In fact we mean the small group of the military, or the revolutionaries, who have neglected their military duties and involved themselves in politics while remaining in the army, and who pursued authority and its temptations, thereby losing their way and inflicting harm on themselves, the army and the people. We must also admit, that many revolutionaries are very sincere, andh ave good intentions and national honesty and at the personal level possess good morals and conduct.

Thirdly, when we criticize and analyze the regimes which came into being as a result of military coups and either claimed to be or honestly tried to become actual revolutions, we do not discuss in detail the positive aspects and serious attemps by them to change the conditions of the corrupt society and to pave the way to progress and socialism, but we consider what they have created in the form of negative results affecting the destiny of the Arab revolution and its fundamental slogan on unity, freedom and socialism.

It is true that in discussing such an important and delicate subject it would be more correct, objectively speaking, to discuss the positive aspects in addition to the negative aspects in order to have a clearer viewpoint and so that the evaluation is more just and beneficial. We, however, do not wish to present a detailed study of those regimes as much as we mean to participate in the effort which tries to throw some light on the various aspects of the crisis of the Arab revolution, which has for a long time been the topic of thinkers and strugglers and on which they have exhausted themselves in trying to analyze it and to discover the reasons for it.

Therefore, the discussion incorporated in this chapter attemps to explain the nature of the military coups d'etats, their justifications and stands vis-à-vis democracy, the masses, popular organizations, national slogans and what they have consequently left behind them in the form of intentional contradictions between these and slogans the final results leading to setbacks and retrogression.

There is no doubt that the military, as a class of the people, are affected by the pain and hopes of the masses

and by whatever is happening around them not only within the state in which they live, but within the whole Arab nation, nay, the whole world. They hear of successful revolutions here and there and particularly in underdeveloped countries. They also sense the weakness of the regimes, the grievances of the people and their indignation over the deteriorating social, economic and political conditions under the aegis of those regimes controlled by the bourgeoisie and reactionaries. They, in addition, sense the restlessness of the toiling masses and the revolutionary spirit that abounds within them and subsequently realize that they have the power to act and why shouldn't they do so? Under circumstances like these it only takes agreement on a plan for a coup among a group of courageous and adventurous officers to achieve what they want. Soon after, the group adopts popular slogans and undertakes some reform and other activities to indicate their ability to act quickly and their desire to carry out radical reforms of existing conditions. Subsequently, the group presents itself as a progressive ruling class capable of eradicating corruption and other obstacles that stand in the way of the development and progress of the people. Other revolutionaries may present themselves as socialist revolutionary rulers who advocate unity and strive to introduce with haste, total and radical changes in the corrupt conditions, or in other words to act with revolutionary reasoning and with the speed dictated by the revolution - any revolution. Briefly, the revolutionaries exploit the state of indignation and the elements of weakness in the prevailing circumstances and thus carry out the needed coup d'etat. Subsequently, some of them with humility justify their coup as stemming from their desire to save the country from the existing conditions and to put it on the road

to progress, while others, with greater ambitions justify it in their desire to achieve a leap forward, through revolutionary action, and to realize the aims of the revolution which the people desire.

In this age, where the major powers have a marked effect on the smaller and underdeveloped countries, or where the latter are strongly affected by the former, and with the development of various means of propaganda, information and communications, the widening of fields of cultural and economic cooperation between states – the strong and the weak – and at a time when military coups d'etat have become a prominent phenomenon repeatedly taking place in various countries, an answer to the following question is imperative: what is the relation between international politics and military coups d'etat? Or, more clearly, do the major powers play a role in the preparations for these coups d'etat and do they support them?

We do not want to go far with those who exaggerate and have a fertile imagination to explain and interpret events. These people explain coups d'etat as being the work of American neo-colonialism engineered by American intelligence and dollars, and ignore the various objective and internal factors which pave the way for them and help in their success. It is not improbable that neo-colonialism, and particularly American neo-colonialism, is involved more or less in the majority of the military coups d'etat that have occurred especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America, because American policy, seeing the failure of the reactionary and bourgeoisie governments cooperating with it in maintaining the confidence of their peoples. in putting an end to the elements of indignation and grie-

ance in their countries and in imposing their authority and openly declaring their pro-Western policy; and after sensing the inability of these governments to prevent the spread of Communism and to hinder the growth of national revolutionary movements* – it sought or participated in establishing new forms of rule entrusted to new elements, who are not held responsible by the people for the corruption, exploitation and backwardness known at the hands of the reactionaries and bourgeoisie, a matter which allows these elements, even for a short while, to achieve some sort of popular support. In general, people are inclined to be optimistic and to give any new regime the benefit of the doubt and a sufficient opportunity to enable it to put forward its plans – especially if the regime is able to present itself as an opponent of corruption and backwardness in a manner that imparts to the rule the power, respect and capability for progress and prosperity.

In fact, the revolutionaries have been able to present themselves thus and to play the role of saviour by striking

* Following the military coup d'etat in Greece, the negative reactions to the coup of the European peoples, governments and press were noticeably strong and clear and indicated fears that the contagion of military coups d'etat might be transmitted to the European continent and consequently hamper democratic life there. It seems that the governments of Europe and the U.S. want military coups d'etat to be the method and salvation only for the underdeveloped countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America! (Perhaps the collapse of the military regime in Greece after its failure to overthrow President Makarios's regime and the ensuing complications in the Cypriot problem is clear evidence of the disadvantages of military regimes and their negative results, not only concerning the development of the peoples of these regions but also those states supporting them, particularly the U.S.).

at feudalism and capitalism through the promulgation of agrarian reform laws, the nationalization of large industrial firms and the implementation of certain economic projects, and by forcibly imposing the authority of the regime. It appears that Western imperialism did not, generally speaking, fear military coups d'etat, because it did not see that in the final result and in the long run they would harm its interests and threaten its position. Because of this misunderstanding Western imperialism depends on subjective studies and scientific knowledge of the immense economic, social, military and political problems which face revolutionaries who are not dependent on any popular organization, lead them to certain pitfalls and weaken them so that they are unable on the one hand to find final solutions to these problems and on the other to push them even more so because of their military background – into restricting democracy, striking at popular movements, weakening the army and turning it away from its basic duties for which it was established.

As a result of all this including the rise of new circumstances and situations, imperialism was able to maintain its interests and to achieve its plans to an extent which allowed it to exploit these circumstances and situations. When the revolutionaries are closer to the reactionary and bourgeois classes, it is easier for imperialism to have dealings with them and to extend to them material and moral support in an effort to maintain its influence as happened in Indonesia, Ghana, Syria during the secession, and in many Latin American states. However, if the revolutionaries are petit bourgeoisie and are favourably disposed to comply with the pressure of the masses and to

move along with them, imperialism would use against them various means of economic, political and propaganda pressures to prevent them from pursuing that line and to stop them at certain limits, or even to force them to pursue a more moderate line. This leads them to have dealings as well as coordination and exchange of interests, with imperialism. In fact, revolutionary regimes which respond to public pressures and oppose imperialism and the pressure of the great powers in many of their stands are rare to find.

Regardless, we do not wish to dwell for long on this point because it depends on a great deal of knowledge involving details, documents, accurate information pertaining to the insights of international politics – which are not available to us and therefore forces us to return to the subject of the nature of military coups d'etat.

Human beings are to a large extent affected by their environment and upbringing. That is to say, the human mentality, morals and concepts of life are drawn basically from the human environment and upbringing more than heredity or any other factor. Military training – which is based on the blind obedience of subordinates to leaders, the execution of orders without questioning or opposing, loyalty to commanders and arms and upholding military power and traditions – constitutes fertile ground for the development of individual leaderships, the strengthening of bureaucracy and personal loyalties and the appearance sometimes of arbitrary stands as a result of feelings of power and desires to implement matters quickly. Moreover, the development of individual leaderships is sometimes related to inexperience, when the majority of the revolutionaries are young men of junior rank. These revolu-

tionaries do not take into account the importance of democracy, popular organizations and collective leaderships as well as the importance of quiet stable dialogue which is devoid of the mentality and boasting of power, especially if they are not well-absorbed in a strong party organization which has trained them to exercise democratic ways and to abide by the opinion of the majority. In other words, military training affects the behaviour and concepts of military personnel in a specific manner which may differ more or less from the behaviour and concepts of the other petit bourgeois classes or any other class. If this is the case with the military in ordinary circumstances, it becomes clearer than ever when a group of them carries out a successful coup d'etat, and they are changed overnight from an unknown entity which carries no political weight or importance into a ruling class possessing authority, rank and influence. Usually, revolutionary officers, who are small in number and most of them are not higher in rank than lieutenants, feel prior to their taking over authority that they are an unknown quantity who only offer obedience and salute hundreds of senior officers in the army and that hundreds of politicians and thousands of employees and members of the free professions are better off than they and more influential in the state and in public life. In other words, they are of no significance in the country – but immediately after assuming power they become all important and are the focus of attention of the people, the press, the radio, etc.... In this case, it is not impossible for us to appreciate the inner feeling of these officers, the thinking that overwhelms them and the logic that affects them. There are feelings of intoxication and self-importance, the logic of control of authority and holding on to the new gains and the mentality of one who

assumes that he himself is more capable than any other to realize the aims of the people. In this case also, we should not be surprised that such great self-importance should change with some of them to a kind of recklessness and conceit. We should also not be surprised if there develops within them a deep-rooted mentality of power and authority overwhelming everything else. To them, wisdom is cowardice, reason is a form of deadly hesitation, dependence on the people and masses a waste of time and an unnecessary game, the non-employment of force an admission of defeat and impotence etc...

When these revolutionaries remain in power for a long time and undertake steps towards reform and construction which gives them some popular support, they develop a stronger belief in their ability and their right to continue in power and to pursue political activities. And in the event that some of them feel the need to gain experience in other fields related to law, politics, economics, literature, then there is no reason for them not to forego their army career and to enrol at a university,*

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* "Officers were sent to continue their university studies, particularly in the faculties of law, economics and political sciences and commerce.... The number of holders of doctorate degrees among officers has been increasing, even at ministerial level". Quote from the book entitled *Misr: Mujtama' Gadid Yabnihi al-'Askariun* (Egypt: A New Society Being Built by the Military), by Anwar 'Abd al-Malik, p. 196.

Thus it seems that the conditions in which the revolutionaries found themselves, whether from the point of view of satisfying a number of intelligent officers, dismissing them from the army or realizing their political ambitions, has made them change their activities to new ones instead of keeping them occupied with their original functions to improve their military competence and strengthening

later returning to assume sensitive government posts so as to continue their service to the people! Some of them might even go beyond this belief that they are more understanding of the people's interests than the people themselves and are more careful in securing these interests. Who knows, maybe some others might even believe that fate or providence had chosen them to save the people and realize their aims in full, without any need for the people's participation or shouldering the burden of the struggle.

As soon as they assume power, the revolutionary officers pay special attention to their colleagues in the army and extend to them special care by improving their living conditions, by increasing their wages and allowances and by granting them long-term loans. In addition they will develop moral and political influence with the state's higher echelons and organizations, as well as with ordinary citizens. In general and with the passage of time officers who are satisfied with the regime and particularly those who are its supporters will obtain considerable moral and material concessions, while those who are detached from the centres of authority and power are subjected to stricter supervision, which is quickly transformed with regard to those who are indignant or in opposition to a kind of restriction and punishment ranging from transfer, dismissal, arrest, defamation, and accusations of reaction, to deviation, conspiracy and betrayal of the aims of the revolution, etc.... These stands of the revolutionaries – who

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the armed forces. It would have been more natural and beneficial in the country's interests that these officers should not be directed to these fields of specialization since Egypt has a surplus of them among the civilian population.

are in control of authority – towards their colleagues, is a natural affair dictated by the very nature of the revolution. This is because the revolutionaries realize that their colleagues not only possess the very same power which brought them to assume the reigns of government but also that they know the secrets that brought them to power – the secrets of making use of the mistakes that will be committed, the indignation that will develop and grow against those in whose hands lies the fate of the country and people. They also know the links that tie the indignant and ambitious officers in the event of a new revolutionary movement which claims anew the task of reform, salvation, the realization of the revolutionary aims and popular demands.*

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* The number of attempted coups d'etat in Syria from 1949 to 1969 was more than 11 attempts of which seven succeeded in assuming power.

The attempted coups in Iraq since 1958 numbered more than seven of which four were successful. In Egypt there were attempts which resulted in liquidations and some involved the leaders of the 23 July revolution. The last of these was the attempt by 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir and Shams ad-Din Badran, the Minister of Defense. In Southern Yemen, there were several attempts, two of which were successful, while the majority ended in failure and liquidation. As for Algeria, which is newly-independent, it entered the scene of military coups d'etat on 19 June 1965 with the removal of Ben Bella. In the Sudan, Abboud succeeded in taking over the reigns of power, but the resistance of the popular forces to him resulted in the downfall of his military regime.

The successful revolutions that took place after 1969 were the following: Numeiri in the Sudan; Qadhafi in Libya and Hafiz al-Asad in Syria. There were many other unsuccessful revolutions in Southern Yemen, Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Sudan.

The revolutionary group, which enjoyed and indulged in political activity and whose mentality and efforts were overcome with the policy of paying special attention to the army, not for reasons of strengthening it, improving its training and raising its technical skill to enable it to confront the danger of imperialism and Israel, but to prevent it from carrying out a coup d'etat – even if such action led to the repeated dismissal and liquidation of army officers. As long as the group's basic aim is to protect its revolution, in fact to protect its own regime, it will not hesitate to employ all ways and means to achieve this aim. In this case, it will not desist from dismissing those who are undesirable – even if those involved were from among the most competent and capable officers – or from retiring them, or transferring them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for stationing abroad in addition to their imprisonment, arrest and even bodily liquidation if the need arises. This category, while resorting to these methods, will not neglect protecting its position with other means such as strengthening the propaganda and information media, the central authority, the bureaucratic organization and in particular the intelligence services. Subsequently it will try to establish popular organizations - which will conform to its policies, strengthen its authority and impart to it the popular connotation, which it lacks.*

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* It is worthwile noting that the position of the existing regime in Iraq after 30 July 1968 has proven up till now that the authorities there are pursuing the popular path and the revolution's interests and that they deal with matters in a new spirit which indicates their desire to avoid the grave mistakes of the Arab governments established by military coups d'etat.

The majority of military coups have even in their early stages a popular support which is stronger and more extensive than that afforded at later stages. Some of them, through their undertakings, every now and then, involving reform activities and projects and the issue of decisions relating to a socialist transformation, were able to maintain some measure of popular support particularly since these undertakings were accompanied by vast propaganda campaigns and concentrated public orientation.

However, this bright and beautiful image which may, because of the above, have been imprinted on the minds of the people whose hopes for basic changes with tangible results and effects are pinned on the new regime, will soon fade away and disappear. This is due to the exaggerated description which the new regime gives itself to the effect that it is capable of putting an end to corruption and exploitation and achieving social justice and the national aims on the one hand, and its disability in the final analysis of ensuring congruity and harmony between this image and the realities of implementation on the other hand – a state of affairs that will create in the mind feelings of despair and disappointment which may be changed in some people into a kind of retraction and disinterest and to indignation instigating opposition with others. In this case, when the people withdraw from the revolutionaries, the latter will start seeking support for their rule by strengthening the central authority which is in their grasp as well as the propaganda media and in addition they well resort to boastful revolutionary terminology, demagogic techniques, and national slogans. They will also seek support from the bureaucratic organizations which usually conform to any authority that does not touch upon their interests.

B. Democracy and Military Regimes.

If the untrue democracy under the fraudulent parliamentary systems created by the bourgeoisie in the period following independence had managed to maintain its exploitation of the working class and to uphold the static situation and corruption, there remained under this democracy some measure of freedom which allows the working class and popular movements to pursue activities and move in the direction that deepens its awareness and consequently serves its interest. This is because the political and labour union organization and freedom of speech, expression and criticism remained more liberal than under those regimes which came into power as a result of military coups d'etat.*

Moreover, if the revolutionaries were forced in the early stages of their assumption of power to resort to violence and terror and to limit the democracy which existed under the bourgeoisie and to disarm it by the pro-

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* Under the reactionary regimes which preceded the revolutionary regimes, the people were able — through the comparative freedom afforded to them — to stage large scale demonstrations which put an end to conspiracies and imperialist plans such as the joint defense plan, the Eisenhower doctrine aimed at filling the vacuum in the Middle East, the Johnston plan for the distribution of the waters of the River Jordan, the Baghdad Pact, the rejection of the unequitable Tapline agreement with Syria (which incidentally was approved by Husni Al-Za'im following his coup d'etat), while these days the masses are unable to stage any demonstration without the approval of the authorities.

It is worthwhile noting that the comparative freedom mentioned above no longer prevails under the existing conventional regimes which were not the result of coups d'etat, with the exception of Lebanon.

mulgation of nationalization decrees, the continued dependence on the expansion of the intelligence services and the adoption of Fascist tactics involving violence, terror and arbitrary arrests in addition to ignoring, at certain times, the simplest rules of democracy and using this method vis-à-vis all categories of people, including the working class and the non-conforming petit bourgeoisie, is a matter that raises doubts and suspicions and poses the following question:

If the revolutionaries are only against the fraudulent bourgeois democracy and are striving to establish a true popular democracy and if they really believe in the masses, in action and not words, and work in their interest, trusting them and are not afraid of them; and if they do look upon the people as a flock of sheep or an ignorant group that does not realize its interests and as juveniles requiring guardianship, shouldn't they after having disarmed the bourgeoisie widen their dependence on the working class composed of workers and peasants and increase the latter's participation in government and in the management of their economic and political affairs as well as provide them with the minimum of democracy which allows them freedom of action and activity and helps them to deepen their class and political awareness instead of manipulating their elections, imposing restrictions on those who oppose the regime and prohibiting them from exercising the right to strike and demonstrate unless they are supporters of the authority?

Many a time, the drift into Fascist or dictatorial methods depends on an ideology which seems to be correct in appearance and logical in its context such as the belief

that the protection of the revolution and the interests of the masses justifies terrorism and the violation of individual freedoms without any legal or moral constraint as if the revolution cannot be protected except through terrorism. Those who hide behind this point of view, forget that true revolutions are protected by sound revolutionary stands and the support of the people. They also forget that any restrictions or limitations on freedom will hamper considerable potentialities and large forces which are inherent in individuals.

In fact, the point of view which justifies terrorism in the name of revolution permits the commitment under its aegis and in its name of the ugliest forms of persecution and terror. Perhaps the belief in this point of view is the result of a voracious greed for power and a way to find justification for remaining at the centre of power – even if this is done at the expense of the most important values. that is, at the expense of democracy and the honour and freedom of citizens. Or it could be the result of total ignorance of the realities of revolutions and fear from the people?

Regardless of the motives or reasons for this point of view, its results are evil and catastrophic because it hampers that which the citizens should enjoy so that they may continue on the path of progress and prosperity.

It is well known that when actual power rests in the hands of a few individuals, then their behaviour, beliefs and sometimes whims, will have a considerable effect on the policy, nature and fate of government. If such individuals are adventurers or self-centered to the extent that they believe that they are the best group for the people and government and that they are the most competent

among the masses, worthy of their representation and capable of achieving their aims, then it is only natural we should find that democracy within their hands is in a state of crisis and trouble.

In discussing democracy in general, and popular democracy in particular we feel that we should concentrate in answering the following question: What is the condition of the masses and working class – the instruments and aims of the Arab revolution – and what is their listing under the aegis of the revolutionary regimes?

It is true that the revolutionaries in certain countries have struck at capitalism and feudalism through agrarian reform and nationalization laws, and removed a major stumbling block in the path of the working class as well as paving the way for the realization of the socialist transformation which in the final result serves the interests of this class if achieved in a sound manner.

But the major fundamental question remains: How sound is the implementation of these laws and decisions and in whose interest are they being implemented?

If it is true that some of the revolutionaries have struck at the large bourgeois class by seizing from it the basic means of production, it is also true that by transferring the ownership of these means to the state and subsequently making the state itself as if it were the property of those who are actually in power and at the same time imposing restrictions on the toiling classes and preventing them from participating in the affairs of government – all this does not mean from the point of view of the end result except to enable the ruling group to remain at the head of the

authority. Even if the revolutionaries praised, for propaganda purposes, the workers and peasants and considered them to be the instruments and aims of the revolution and in addition claimed that what they were undertaking was in the interest and service of the toiling classes – permitting the establishment of trade organizations, providing them on occasions with funds and giving them material assistance – all this does not change the heart of the problem discussed as long as the nationalized means of production remain at the disposition of the state, or a weapon in its hands in the service of those in authority and as long as the management policy of the means of production is not changed and is not transferred to the working class with regard to administration, orientation, supervision, distribution and development, except for the minor attemps made towards the introduction of self-management which are still in the experimental stage and within very restricted limits.

Moreover, interference in the elections of the leaderships of the working class and its representatives – preventing it from exercising its right to strike and demonstrate and to engage in political activity except when the state so desires and to the extent fixed by it – and imposing laws from above relating to it and keeping it far removed from effective participation in basic issues – we can say that all this not only strengthens bureaucracy and the organization of suppression and terrorism but indicates the fear of the revolutionaries of the toiling masses and explains the reasons for continuing to apply pressure on them despite justification put forward for this fear and pressure as being an effort to prevent the enemies of the revolution from exploiting the working class. At the

same time it indicates their lack of confidence in the ability and aware-ness of the working class and leads them to justify their guardianship over it. From this and with the passage of time the revolutionaries develop the guardianship trait and the mentality of the chosen few and consequently those measures which are temporary become permanent, and the prospect of development towards the effective participation of the masses becomes irrelevant and comes to a halt except in talk and promises.

From the above, shouldn't we question the nature of the gains obtained by the working class relating to the attack against and disarming of, the bourgeoisie through the nationalization of the basic means of production and shouldn't we ask whether this gain exceeds the loss sustained by it under the revolutionary regimes?

We must go on to point out that this questioning does not mean inviting those responsible for these regimes to return to some kind of liberal bourgeois democracy, but calling on them – if this is to any avail – to allow the working class and its allies from other categories who are loyal to the aims of the Arab revolution and, who have real interest in struggling for the revolution, to participate effectively and not for propaganda purposes in political and economic affairs. Also to call on them to act on the basis of faith in the working masses and their vast capabilities, who would realize the aims of the revolution if these capabilities are given the methods of creating awareness and organization and the freedom of work and activity.

We shall now turn to a discussion of the positions of the revolutionary regimes vis-à-vis the revolutionary

popular organizations which are considered to be the fully-aware power in the eyes of the masses and which play a major role in leading the masses and creating an awareness among them and which consequently have the most important effect in the preparation for the Arab revolution and its maturity.

The maturity of a revolution – any revolution – and its success in any country and at any specific time are directly related to objective conditions and historical circumstances as well as to other factors connected to the human will. Just as a plant does not grow in barren soil nor in an unsuitable climate, even if looked after and cared for by the human hand and conversely does not grow in a fertile land and suitable climate unless cared for by man – the seeds of revolution likewise do not grow nor ultimately bear fruit unless there exists in society conditions of corruption, backwardness and exploitation on the one hand, and unless the people feel and are sensitive to these conditions on the other.

However, for feelings and sensitiveness to be changed into an effective indignation which evokes the struggle and instigates the search for a means of change and salvation, there must be an organized leadership to direct the masses in one direction and make of their scattered and dispersed forces a unified coherent force directed in one channel. Insofar as this leadership is active and aware of the aims and functions of the revolution, it will save time and effort which might be wasted for the lack of awareness and the absence of the conditions for the required leadership. In this age, however, a leadership cannot be that of an individual or even a small group who are bound by class

interests or vocational ties, such as the army or other similar relations. It must be the leadership of an organized revolutionary party, which includes members who have freely and voluntarily tied their fate to the aims of the party – which are the aims of the revolution as well – and who have in the cause been subjected to difficulties, pain and heavy sacrifices and gained leadership experience, and developed political awareness and ideological maturity as a result of the pursuit of education, the struggle and experiences and not merely from reading books and from theoretical discussions held in clubs and private homes.

The Arab revolution at this historical stage lives in an atmosphere which is suitable for its growth and flourish, since Israel and Zionism continue to challenge the Arab peoples and threaten them with danger. Neo-colonialism also controls some states, drawing their wealth and exploiting their resources. There is also economic and social underdevelopment factors for divisions and regional interests which maintain the Arab people in a pitiful state of weakness and dispersion.

Hence, if the proper atmosphere, that is the historical and objective circumstances, for the Arab revolution is present and if the instrument for the revolution, that is the masses, are existing under the conditions described above, what is it that stands in the way of the achievement of the Arab revolution?

In the economically, socially and ideologically advanced countries we find aware masses and organized political movements, but not the objective conditions which evoke revolution, namely backwardness and corruption. Hence in these countries no revolutionary movements arise, devel-

opment proceeds in a normal manner and changes in various economic and political fields take place in a customary fashion without any need for violence or force. However, in the backward countries, including the Arab states, the objective conditions for revolution are present and yet the revolution has not yet taken place because the toiling masses, who are its instruments, have not had the opportunity to exercise various activities, work and organization. In addition, the vanguard revolutionary organizations have not been permitted to play their basic role in creating an awareness and in orientation, because of the methods of suppression and terror used by the conventional and progressive rulers alike.

It is true that the revolutionaries have realized that the masses are a basic and effective force and that any regime, regardless of its military power, cannot survive for long if isolated from the people and alienated by the toiling masses. It is also true that they talked a great deal about the interests of these masses, considering them to be the source of authority who have a real interest in the revolution and for whom reform is to be carried out in addition to other similar claims as we have previously mentioned. They also were aware of the importance of organizing these masses and thus they established in their name unions and political organizations but on a wrong and dangerous basis since it was based on a concept which constitutes the heart of the problem, namely taking away from them freedom of speech, work and organization except within the limits permitted by the state. This concept calls for the imposition of labour union and political organizations from above – from the authorities – and their establishment is announced through administrative decrees

and decisions in isolation from the will and participation of the people. The natural outcome of these organizations is paralysis and failure since they were artificially created and did not come into being in a natural way, and also because they incorporate contradictions and include all types. In the event the leadership of these organizations needs to resort to elections, it is easy for the state authorities to produce the type required, if not by pressure and fraud by other means of inducement, temptation or threats.*

Thus the leaderships who have been given the right to lead, direct and supervise the masses, become tied to the authorities and their organizations and consequently implement their orders and directives instead of representing the will of the masses and expressing their interest, particularly since these leaderships did not come to the fore through struggle and belief in the aims of the masses but by their loyalty to the authorities and by conforming to authorities' directives and instructions. After a short while, however, the disability of these organizations – at the leadership and base levels – is revealed as well as their failure to win over the masses as well as their voluntary support for the regime. Subsequently, the authorities who had established these organizations start complaining and start looking for alternatives or new forms that may be more inducive and effective. However, those responsible forget that it is the absence of democracy which keeps

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* In the labour union elections which were held in Iraq in October 1968, the Ba'th Party and the government was careful to ensure the freedom of the workers and the non-interference of the authorities' organizations in the elections.

the masses in a state of fear, despair and retraction which strangle the seeds of the revolution and prevent it from developing and spreading. They also forget, or pretended to forget, that the effective revolutionary spirit is that which flourishes in an atmosphere of freedom and through struggle and experience as well as natural voluntary organization which is far-removed from any artificiality, pressure, fraud and extortion.

There is no doubt that the toiling class of workers and peasants gain a considerable amount of class and political awareness – which is a necessary pre-requisite for the maturity of the revolution and its leadership – through what may be made available to some individuals in the form of culture and education.

Undoubtedly, the revolutionary parties, with their organization and abilities with regard to propaganda and orientation and through their revolutionary ideology can play an effective and major role in deepening the awareness of the working class and its leadership. Perhaps this very function is the most important of what is required of political parties in the present circumstances prevailing in the Arab world. Hence attacks on revolutionary parties, considering them to be factors for dissension and division among citizens, placing them on equal footing with the bourgeoisie parties and accusing them of representing the interests of exploiters and being the instruments of opportunists in addition to other such accusations does not, in reality and in the final end, lead except to dealing a blow to popular movements which stems naturally from the people and develops as a result of struggle and experience,

and also paralyzes the vanguard revolutionary parties without which the masses are unable to play their role and raise their standard of awareness and capability for organization and pursuing the struggle. Even if the parties in question are not up to the required revolutionary standard, these continuous and ruthless attacks have only aggravated their weakness and inability to rise to this standard.

Therefore, any regime which desires to pursue the socialist democratic system must draw its strength in the first place from the toiling masses, their popular organizations and their continued and organized participation. But when a regime draws its strength from an emotional and unstable popular support, which is seasonal, unorganized and depends on strong bureaucratic organizations that utilize terror and brutality to suppress any opposition even if it comes from the working class, then the rule cannot be that of a socialist democratic society which might even lead to such a society. It will be the rule of the capitalism of the state itself which is led and controlled by a group of petit bourgeoisie which is unable to move along with the Arab revolution to its final end but may go against the revolution when it ceases to need the masses, abrogates their role and monopolizes for itself the leadership and the base at one and the same time,.

The regimes which followed military coups d'etats have fought revolutionary parties with means and weapons which varied with each of the different regimes. Some of

them attacked partisanship and parties without any discrimination between the good and the bad, or between the popular revolutionary parties which truly believe in unity, freedom and socialism and bourgeoisie parties which represent capitalism, feudalism and reactionary elements. They even considered the principle of allowing the existence of party life as a danger to the unity of the people, and instead they relied on the continually growing bureaucratic establishments and popular organizations set up by government decisions and directives, whose unhomogenous elements cannot agree on one aim except to meet and demonstrate at ceremonies and celebrations ordered or recommended by the authorities for support and applause and to give the impression propagandawise, that the regime still commands popular support. It is also natural that when the disability of these organizations is exposed replacing them with other organizations based on a new structure but which have the same concepts and basis of formation, becomes inevitable.

It is not shameful that those responsible should resort to change and try many experiments. But if the insistence on the same concepts and bases in these changes and new experiences does not point to the lack of an overall awareness of the circumstances and needs in this historical phase, it certainly indicates the unseriousness of the change and the perpetual fear of allowing the participation of popular movements in authority and orientation; this participation which means first and foremost, imposing restrictions on the freedom of individuals in manipulating the most serious problems and stands and finding objective conditions for elevating the strugglers and the leaders of the toiling masses to the ranks of leadership and authority – a state of

affairs which the revolutionaries do not desire and which they will spare no effort to prevent.

Perhaps this method which openly and publicly attacked and fought against revolutionary parties was less harmful and dangerous for them than the other method used by some revolutionaries in paralyzing them and deranging them from within, as what happened, in my estimate to the liberation movement in Algeria and what happened, as I am certain, to the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party in Syria at the hands of what was known as the military committee and the revolutionaries of 23 February 1966.

At this point, we consider it of the utmost importance to pause a little so that we may expose this malicious method and to draw a lesson from the mistakes of the revolutionary organizations which did not take heed early enough of the dangers of this method and optimistically pursued the possiblility of converting the coup d'etat into a revolution. Let us take, for example, what happened to the Ba'th Party with the revolutionaries in Syria.

C. The Revolutionaries and the Ba'th Party: A Bitter and Useful Experience.

In view of the limitations of space it is not possible to enter into the details of the events, reasons and circumstances that led the Ba'th Party to participate with the revolutionaries after 8 March 1963 in the affairs of government, but we hope that the brief resume which we will present with regard to this question is clear and beneficial enabling the reader to grasp the obscure aspects of the issue and to help him deduce the useful lessons therefrom.

For the sake of the union between Syria and Egypt and under its aegis, the Party dissolved itself, and its members became separate groups and blocs. During the reign of the secessionist regime, the Fifth National Conference was held in 1962 and decided to restructure the Party in Syria after scrutinizing the preceding phase and drawing up a political plan based on endeavours to reestablish unity. All those who accepted the plan and the national concept became members of the Party while others who dropped the Party had been either affected by Mr. Akram al-Hourani or who were known as "regionalists" for their refusal to accept the National Party's intervention in the re-establishment of unity. During the secession the Party was engaged in many issues which proved its existence and strength anew.

With regard to those military personnel who were Party members, their inclinations were distributed among the various blocs and sectors. But a group of them had established a military committee to be in charge of the organizational and policy affairs and to maintain liaison with the Party leadership and the other separatist blocs. This committee continued its clandestine activities, as a leadership for an independent party until 1964 when one of its members, Major General Muhammad Omran, disagreed with the other members and exposed the committee's functions and objectives aimed at controlling the Party and government.

This committee, together with those affiliated to it, played a major role in the events of 8 March 1963, during the secessionist regime. It was natural for the top members of the military committee and its planners to cooperate

with regionalists, since the latter were closer to them in their political and ideological concepts and more responsive to their thinking and plans. This became extremely clear after the 23rd of February, 1966. However, the Party's rise to power in Iraq one month before its assumption of authority in Syria was a decisive factor in the decision of the military committee in choosing to cooperate with the National Leadership of the Party.

When this cooperation started it was characterized on the side of the members of this committee firstly by doubts and caution with regard to the Party and its leadership – and this was clear from the fact that they kept the question of military affairs a closed matter to the Party and its leadership and in their unceasing endeavours to place themselves in the leadership on a par with the civilians, keeping themselves informed on civilian affairs and participating in organizing, directing and supervising these affairs without affording a similar right to the civilians in the leadership with regard to the military sector on the pretext that the circumstances of the military are delicate and require absolute secrecy, and that they are trusted and are more informed in managing their own affairs. Secondly, by the principle of dependence on military power, disregarding the Party and people and taking lightly the values of democracy. Thirdly, by firmly believing not only that they have more right than the civilian leadership and have more priority to take over the reigns of power and the Party but also that they are more capable.

The participation of the Party in the government began after 8 March 1963 at a time when the Party was still weak in its organization and framework, and when the various

splinter groups had a negative attitude to the Party. Moreover, the problems and responsibilities of government were absorbing the efforts of most of the Party leadership, who because of their feelings of responsibility towards the people tried to speed up practical measures aimed at unity and socialism in conformity with the principles of the Party and out of a desire to present practical proof to the people that the 8 March coup d'etat will be converted during the Party's regime into a revolution. On the morning of 8 March 1963, a first meeting was held which included four representatives of the Ba'th Party, namely, Messrs. Michel 'Aflaq, Salah Bitar, 'Abd al-Karim Zuhur and Shibli al-Aysami; four civilians representing the other unionist factions, and eight military personnel. All conferees represented the first National Council. At this meeting, the representatives of the Party affirmed that what had taken place on 8 March was a military coup d'etat and what was required was to convert it into a revolution. On the basis of the approval of this concept, joint work among those concerned had begun. However, events slowly revealed that the raison d'etre behind this participation was based on good intentions and an optimism that it was possible to change the plans and concepts of the revolutionaries forcing them to abide by the will of the masses, as well as the methodology and behavioral pattern of the Party. Moreover, cooperation in government between the Party and the other unionist forces, instead of being based on an awareness of the graveness of the stage which the Arab revolutionary forces were passing and of the need for consolidating these forces in a single front and strengthening trust and cooperation among them, an atmosphere of doubt prevailed over the behaviour of the coalition parties, and competition for the centres of power

appeared, as well as the logic of grabbing power with each side trying to secure for itself the lion's share. The natural result of all this was of course the dissolution of the coalition and the transformation of the competitiveness into an open dispute which culminated in the unsuccessful coup d'etat attempt on 18 July 1963 which of course led to the weakening of all the parties concerned vis-à-vis the people and paved the way for attemps at insurrection and strikes on behalf of the reactionary forces waiting to pounce on the regime. These attemps in turn forced those responsible for the regime to resort to various means of suppression and violence, to fall victim to the use of force, which conforms with the concepts of the military – in dealing with the problems that hampered the revolution. If these problems had come to end at this point matters would have been easy, but a new type of contradiction was established and the struggle at a different level has begun. Within the Party itself, there was a struggle between two contradicting points of view – one being represented by the military committee, which expressed disregard to the Party and people in addition to the democratic values (and many times some members of the committee boasted that one tank would be capable of suppressing the largest popular demonstration) and also tried to monopolize authority, exercise guardianship over the people and deepen regional concepts while ignoring serious endeavours to strengthen the struggle for unity. The second point of view was represented by the Party leadership and expressed a strong opposition to making the Party subservient to the authority and a mere facade or instrument in the hands of the military committee. The Party resisted methods of extemporization and violence and insisted on the need for popular endeavours, interest in the Party and an under-

standing of its principles as well as adherence to its behavioural pattern. This point of view was expressed in the decisions issued by the National Command of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party in December 1964 and the succeeding decisions. The struggle between these two views became stronger culminating in the coup d'etat of 23 February 1966, when the masks finally fell off the faces of the regionalists and the true facts of the struggle and its implications become public knowledge. Moreover, it was established that the Party as well as the people were afflicted by the techniques of the military committee, its ambitions and maneuvers.

The struggle within the regime between the Ba'th and the other unionist forces had consumed great potentialities and masked many aspects of the plans of the military committee with regard to the Party itself. However, no sooner the struggle had ended when the military committee proceeded to implement its plans aimed at controlling the Party and the army as well as the people. It succeeded in doing so through the following methods:

1) Keeping for itself the centres of power in the army, the intelligence services and political branch.

2) Expanding the military organization and restricting its direction and supervision to the military committee.

3) Including members of the military committee in the civilian leadership of the Party as a formula to amalgamate the civilian and military sectors and striving continuously to maintain the leadership in the largest possible number of the military.

4) Confronting the Party at the meeting of the National Council, the Party leadership and conference with a unified point of view which has been agreed upon previously by the military committee and which is binding on the military members.

5) Benefiting from the disharmony among the civilian leadership and exploiting their differences and at the same time instigating one side against the other.

6) Expanding contacts with the leading members of the Party branches and offering them attractive proposals and suggesting to them ministerial portfolios, other top posts and chairmanships of companies.

7) Encouraging personal loyalties and other previous groupings and supporting one bloc against another and subsequently withdrawing such support and giving it to the opposing bloc when its interest so requires. This may happen repeatedly.

8) Enlisting a large number of new members in the Party through devious means after the members of the committee together with who support them from among the civilians had secured for themselves a majority in the regional command.*

9) Circumventing the internal by-laws of the Party and adhering to the letter of the provisions when this serves their objectives.

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* The higher command of the Party in each Arab country is called the regional command, while the National Command — the supreme leadership of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party — stems from a national conference which includes representatives from the various Arab states.

10) Entrusting the intelligence services to circulate rumours and malicious lies about opposition members so as to weaken their positions and demoralize them.

11) Maintaining the country in a perpetual state of tension, and exploiting acts of sedition and unrest that took place to strengthen the grip of the military committee and impose its dictatorship on the government, the Party and people.

Through the participation of the Ba'th, the revolutionaries acquired several gains: they ensured for themselves the popular shroud which they felt they badly needed, they were attributed with the Party's past, heritage and popular character and they absorbed from it those impatient and tired elements who sought power and position and used them as an obedient popular facade which implements their plans and objectives.

As for the Party, its participation in the government stripped it of its popular democratic identity after the repeated acts of violence, suppression and terrorism undertaken against the opposition, the criticizers as well as the malicious and spiteful enemies. This also led to its isolation from the masses in a manner that it has been unable to eradicate through agrarian reform laws, nationalization decisions and even the perpetual call for endeavours towards unity, freedom, socialism and the working class.

I assume that the reader, as soon as he finishes reading what was mentioned with regard to the methods employed by the military committee, will have in mind many questions with regard to the position of the Party leadership vis-à-vis these methods; why did it allow the committee

to go to this extent and why it did not announce a distinction between the Party and government, etc...

In respect for truth and history, it can be said that the leaders of the Party had sensed during the first months, the adverse effects of the actions and behaviour of this committee without knowing of its organized existence. They tried to correct matters by way of criticism and self-criticism and continued to caution and warn. When all this had fallen on deaf ears, five ministers – who adhered to Party concepts – tendered their resignations. However, because of unexpected events, the resignations were withheld and later withdrawn. Moreover, the leaders of the Party had discussed more than once, the idea of separating the Party from the government. But in view of the subsequent difficult times which included the unsuccessful military coup of 18 July, the merchants' strike in Damascus, Homs and other cities and other subsequent events, it was inappropriate in the opinion of the Party comrades to shed responsibility for the government during such crucial times. There was also some delay with regard to decision-taking and implementation as well as some hope for finding a solution to these problems through the Party and its conferences. The Party Secretary General, Professor Michel 'Aflaq, had left the country in mid-1964 and travelled to Germany where he stayed for a few months as a form of pressure and a way to force the Party members to consider and pay attention to the realities of the crisis and to appreciate its inherent dangers after getting tired of cautioning and warning and becoming weary of giving advice and directives and because the regional command which was subject to the military committee, had adopted a technique aimed at misleading the members and keeping

the facts from them by refraining sometimes from the distribution of the pamphlets of the national command or restricting such distributing so as to implement, in form only, the Party's internal regulations.

Regardless of the results and justifications of the absence of the Secretary General, he finally returned to Syria and the National Command held several extraordinary meeting at the end of 1964 during which the realities and repercussions of the crisis were discussed clearly and frankly. At this time, some of the leaders had prepared a lengthy statement announcing the separation of the Party from the government and enumerating the justifications and reasons for that action. However, the members of the military committee in the National Council called for an extraordinary meeting of the council. And having not informed the members of the National Command of the purpose of the meeting, the latter decided to continue the meetings of the National Command and not to attend the meetings of the Council, the results of which – announced the following day – were the issue of nationalization decisions affecting 108 companies in an arbitrary manner without any accuracy or study, because those responsible, were forced after a short while, to abrogate the nationalization of a large number of these companies on the basis that they were not subject to the legislation provisions and were not worth nationalization. Later it was apparent that the motive behind announcing the decisions was for political rather than socialist reasons, in an effort to embarrass the national command, undermine its atetmpts to place restrictions on the military committee and prevent the latter's domination of the Party, the army and people, and to prevent the separation of the Party from the go-

government. True enough, any separation following the announcement of the nationalization decisions would be interpreted as an action against these decisions and aimed at failing the attempt at a socialist transformation, thus making it easy to label such separation as being in the interest of the right and the bourgeoisie. For these reasons it was inappropriate to issue the aforementioned communique and it was finally ignored. The national command continued its meetings and supported the nationalization decisions after pointing out that the said decisions were issued in an arbitrary manner for political reasons. The national command also demanded the nationalization of external trade and entrusted the Secretary General, Mr. Michel 'Aflaq, to clearly announce the necessity for such action. As soon as the Ba'th newspaper published this statement, members of the military committee and its supporters started levelling their disapproval and criticism on the basis that the statement had divulged matters which must not be made public prior to their implementation. However, the real reason behind their disapproval and criticism was their desire to give the impression that the national command was against socialist transformation, or at least it could not claim any credit for it. Moreover, the statement incorporated criticism of arbitrary behaviour of the military committee and its supporters as well as their hostile attitude to the masses and it enumerated the basic conditions needed for the success of the socialist measures which must be a part of a well-studied and comprehensive plan of all the vital sectors affecting the basic interests of the masses. The statement pointed out to one more condition, namely, the establishment of popular and government organizations to supervise the experiment and rectify any mistakes that may occur. It also said that "the

most important condition was that the regime and the Party should be open to the masses... and that the Party should be strengthened by controlling its organization, respecting its regulations and heeding its leadership... and preventing its organizations and elements from becoming lackeys to bureaucratic organizations".

The national command concluded its extraordinary meetings by adopting important and fundamental decisions, which if implemented, would have put a stop to the deviations and helped the Party not only to overcome its paralysis but to pursue serious work and fruitful activity. It is perhaps worthwhile here to mention the most important decisions, since they could throw some light on the basic aspects of the crisis, that is those related to the involvement of the military in political matters and their control of the military committee of the government, the Party and the people.

Decision No. (2) provides for the total separation of the army from political activities.

Decision No. (3) provides for the replacement of the military committee with a military bureau affiliated to the regional command, like any other of its attached bureaus.

Decision No. (5) stipulates that the representation of military personnel in Party conferences, as observers, must not exceed 10 percent, with the proviso that the army Commander in Chief and the Minister of Defense are to be excepted if they are Party members and considered ordinary members of the conference. (This decision was aimed at preventing the control of the military committee and its maneuvres in the election of Party leaderships).

Decision No. (7) stipulates that the military personnel will have the right to choose between remaining in the army and exercising political functions in the government Party leaderships.

Decision No. (8) stipulates that holding more than two posts in Party and official organizations is prohibited: membership of the national command, membership of the Presidential Council, member of the cabinet, and the Army Command.

Decision No. (9) stipulates that not more than one fourth of the members of the national command may be participants in the affairs of government.

Decision No. (10) provides for continuing in the application of the provisional constitution and the establishment of a committee to draw up a permanent constitution not later than December 1965.

Decision No. (11) affirms the principle of separating the executive from the legislative authorities.

Decision No. (14) recommends speeding up the expansion of the national council with the proviso that workers are to be represented in it by means of elections.

Decision No. (16) condemns the regional command for exceeding its prerogatives and the methods it employs which are regional and aimed at control.

The reactions of the military to these decisions were violent and quick. They threatened to resign their posts in the army, the Party and goverment and subsequently called for the convening of the regional command during which most of the members expressed their satisfaction and cooperation with the decisions but voiced their fear as well that the crisis may escalate and result in the co-

llapse of the whole situation as what happened to the ruling Ba'th Party in Iraq. There followed many maneuvres and pressures against the national command which forced it to retract from its decision related to the freezing of the activities of the regional command and to await the convening of the Eighth National Conference. In so doing, the national command committed a grave mistake which was added to the mistake of its delaying announcement concerning the separation of the Party from the government and in wasting its time and effort in the whirlpool of the continuous discussions and meetings.

When the Eighth National Conference was held in 1965 its decisions expressed middle-of-the-road settlements aimed at avoiding the eruption of the crisis and that would be apparently satisfactory to all or some of the parties concerned. Mr. Michel 'Aflaq presented the crisis clearly and frankly after most of the conferees had opted for a moderate solution in the hope of salvaging the Party and the regime from a quick collapse and the ensuing disaster. Mr. 'Aflaq insisted on refusing to be nominated as Secretary General and supporting the nomination of Dr. Munif al-Razzaz. There was no confrontation or dispute between Dr. Razzaz and the military and thus he considered himself "capable of cooperation with all the parties with an open mind". He proceeded to work with all seriousness and fervour, gave all his effort time and mind to make a success of the new experiment and to overcome the crisis. However, "he had not appreciated the extent of the obstacles that stood in his way", as he so aptly said*.

* Razzaz, Dr. Munif, *Al-Tajribah al-Murrah* (The Bitter Experience), Ghandour House, p. 133. (In this book, there are a lot of details on the crisis and its developments).

Regardless, the new national command was forced at a later date, to confront and resist the behaviour of the military and the regional command which they controlled. It also was forced to adopt decisions similar in their substance and contents, to those adopted by the previous national command, of which we have enumerated a few. The crisis continued and it escalated and became more complicated and there was no solution to it from the point of view of the revolutionaries except by using the technique of Alexander of Macdonia that is the sword; either the Party leadership would surrender to those holding the gun and controlling the tank and to allow the latter to control the Party and manipulate it as long as they wished – and this was not accepted or possible – or alternatively the military who are in possession of strength of arms would submit to the Party concepts and to the higher leadership which possessed only the strength of the spoken word – and this was also not accpted or possible so long as they planned ever since the establishment of the military committee to take over the Party and to pursue the path that realized their aspirations. Thus when the revolutionaries became unable to resist the confrontation of the national command, which is the natural and lawful representative of the Party and after exhausting all their methods of pressure, temptation and trickery they resorted to the use of force which they maintained, and carried out their new coup d'etat on 23 February 1966 under the pretext of reform and putting an end to deviationism, liquidating the right and strengthening the left, getting rid of chaos, extemporism and dictatorial inclinations as well as other pretexts and justifications. Thereafter, yesterday's partners become traitors to and conspirators against the people and the revolution and they should be persecuted, placed in prisons

and concentration camps and the ugliest forms of torture and humiliation must be used against them.

However, the leaders of the Ba'th Party, despite their courageous confrontation of the plans of the military committee and their steadfastness in the face of the military control practiced by the committee, must bear a large part of the responsibility for the failure of the Party during the period it had participated in the government. They also fell victims – and I consider myself to be one them and cannot vindicate myself – to a lot of mistakes whose negative effects were reflected on the Party and hampered its natural progress:

We can perhaps summarize these mistakes as follows:

(1) Their optimism and miscalculations which did not stem from an objective study of the nature of military coups d'etats but out of good intentions and a belief in the possibility of changing a military coup into a revolution.

(2) Their belief that it is possible for those military personnel who were Ba'thists and who later assumed authority at a time when they were non-members and thus were not subject to the Party's lawful leadership and culture to become affiliated anew with the policy of the Party and will obey its orders and directives.

(3) Their delay in announcing the separation of the Party from the government and their pausing at secondary considerations, such as fear of criticism – from the point of view of Party comradeship – in the event they relinquished their responsibility for participating in government in difficult and delicate times, or in

their belief that serious crises can be solved through discussion and dialogue at Party meetings and conferences.

(4) Their falling victims to the whirlpool of closed meetings and their neglect to a large extent, the Party organization and awareness, as well as their inability to present clearly the struggle and its substance to the broad base of the Party and to the people.

(5) Their affectation, more than it should, by the delicate circumstances surrounding them – and the military committee had a hand in creating the circumstances – and their inability to put an end to the military committee's plans aimed at forcing the Party to assume authority alone and to become hostile to other popular organizations.

CHAPTER FIVE*

RECENT EVENTS AND PROJECTS AIMED AT UNITY

If we leave out certain specific events in the Arab world which express the will to resist and the rejection of the policy of surrender, such as the nationalization of the oil industry in Iraq and the operations of the Palestinian resistance against Israel, the general inference from other events during the last two years points out that official Arab policy has remained in a state of entanglement, confusion and deterioration and has not yet risen to the confrontation level and the ability to face up to the dangers threatening the Arab nation.

(1) Arab reactionaries were able to exploit in the best possible manner the setback of 5 June 1967 and what it had revealed of the weaknesses of the progressive regimes, their need for material support and readiness to abandon their revolutionary pursuits and subsequently to meet the reactionaries in the middle of the road. This began when the reactionary regimes accepted the invitation for the Arab Summit Conference in Khartoum and decided to contribute money for the sake of "steadfastness and the

* This Chapter was written three months before the 1973 October war and was published in a book entitled "Al Wihdah al-'Arabiyah Min Khilal al-Tajribah" (Arab Unity as Viewed from the Experiment), 2nd Edition.

elimination of the consequences of the aggression", and finally concentrated on the slogan of Arab solidarity and unity of ranks as well as the suspension of Arab disputes so as to confront the greatest danger of all as represented by Zionisn and Israel. In their adherence to these slogans they seemed to be as one who speaks the truth but intends falsehood. This is because these slogans did not protect the regimes from being exposed before the masses and at the same time they not only enabled them to destroy the progressive forces, but placed them in a position of strength and gave them the ability to interfere and cause havoc within the progressive Arab regimes. Everyone knows the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Emirates in activating the forces and pockets of reactionaries in Egypt and Syria with a view to enabling them to affect or even assume power, and in containing some other regimes, such as Jordan, Lebanon, North Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman and directing them to conform to their policies which are tied to world imperialism. Thus Arab reactionaries were able through their exploitation of the June defeat, their huge funds and cooperation with imperialism to cover up the distinctions between them and the progressive regimes with the resulting mix-up between the good and the bad in the eyes of the people. Moreover, those who contribute a small amount of their oil income became regarded as Arab nationalists full of sincerity to the Arab cause, even if they were involved up to their ears in cooperating with the worst of the enemies of the Arab nation, that is, America, which harms and challenges the Arabs no less than Israel.

(2) As for King Hussein, he continued to resist and persecute the guerillas in a manner which is no less vin-

dictive and brutal than what Israel itself is doing. He then submitted his plan for the establishment of the "Arab United Kingdom" as an open move towards surrender and the final liquidation of the Palestine problem. The project, as it seems, provides for the establishment of a federal union between the two banks – the East and West banks – and granting the Palestinians the right to self-determination through elected councils and to exercise self-rule. But, in fact, the project in its essence ignores the existence of the Palestinian revolution as well as its martyrs and real leaders. It also enables Israel to realize what it has been seeking – a recognition of its entity, gaining effective control of the West Bank and creating objective circumstances that permit it to strengthen its foothold and extend its economic influence over the Arab world.

Despite the violent negative reactions to this suspect project, King Hussein pursued a policy of "open bridges" with Israel and moved closer to America and to depend on it. He paid no attention to the future or the judgement of history, nor to the anger of the masses and the effects of Arab isolation with regard to his regime as long as it is an uneffective temporary isolation and he finds that his currying favour with America, Israel and the reactionary states is sufficient to strengthen and protect his regime. What is perhaps striking, is the fact that the Jordanian regime suspended hostilities with Israel and created a fence to protect it from guerilla attacks, and Israel on its part ceased to attack it and disturb it thereby creating circumstances which enabled Jordan to despatch a considerable number of its army officers to Oman and the Gulf Emirates to offer their "technical experiences" in these areas. As for American imperialism it undertakes planning and

coordination of roles between Israel and the reactionary regimes in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iran with a view to protect its interests and to confront the progressive regimes in the Arab homeland.

(3) With regard to the Arabian Gulf area, it has become the focus of attention for American imperialism which strives to maintain the sort of microscopic regimes there and to protect them and tighten its control over them to ensure the exploitation of the petroleum resources. It also made Iran a strong military power, to threaten the states in the area, particularly Iraq – which is a liberated progressive regime. It encouraged Iran to occupy the three Arab islands (Abu Musa, the Greater Tumb and Lesser Tumb) and shortly afterwards, Israel attempted to occupy, in collusion with American imperialism, other Arab islands at the entrace of the Red Sea. These events, despite their importance, did not push the Arab states to take any serious common move with the exception of Iraq, which was not able on its own to avert it and confront it. Meanwhile, the reactionary Arab states adopted a disinterested position as if the matter did not concern them, and even some of them, such as Saudi Arabia, did not hesitate to entice and cooperate with the aggressor states and to turn a blind eye to the immigration and illegal entry of Iranians and their control of the vital sectors in the Gulf Emirates. At the same time restrictions were imposed on Arab nationals seeking employment there – a situation which forecasts the creation of another Palestine in that Arab area, which is extremely important from the point of view of its huge petroleum resources and strategic position.

(4) I do not think that I am exaggerating or being unfair

if I say that evidence of the confusion and retrogression in Arab policies became clearer and clearer after the acceptance of the Rogers' initiative, the abandonment of the war of attrition, the adherence to the cease-fire and going along with the reactionary states in the name of Arab solidarity, the national character of the struggle and for the sake of securing some financial assistance. Also such evidence became clearer following the adoption of many stands and measures which revived the rightists and those elements favouring the peaceful settlement to such an extent that it created, at the same time, doubts with regards to the friendship of the USSR and the benefits derived from cooperating with it as well as calls to "neutralize" the US and to win its favour, in the hope of reaching that kind of settlement. In view of all this, we go on rightfully to ask: Was not this policy – and what accompanied it in the form of hesitation and improvisation as well as the resulting similar reactions – responsible to a large extent for the ousting of Soviet experts from Egypt at the most crucial moment and in the most erroneous way which undermined the confidence between Egypt and the Soviet Union at a time when such confidence should have been strengthened in view of the fierce battle the Arabs were waging against voracious strategic alliance between Zionism and imperialism under the leadership of the United States? And since this problem has important consequences and repercussions, not restricted to Egypt alone, but encompassing the very essence of the question of the liberation of Palestine and the other Arab territories, we are obliged to pause a little at this point to put forwards our views in a spirit of constructive criticism and out of our care for the national problem. From my own conclusions and beliefs, for which I am alone responsible, many of those

who heard about the ousting of the Soviet experts, thought that in lieu of this step there would be an equitable price – at least involving the withdrawal of Israel from occupied Arab territories and the realization of the peaceful settlement – the dream of those who advocate it and who label it as the just and honourable solution. Regardless of the negative consequences in the Arab problem of the policy of peaceful coexistence between the major powers and regardless of the merits of the justification that led to the ousting of the Soviet experts, which we even appreciate, no one thought that such a major step would be undertaken without a price, and that friends are to be told either you give us everything that we ask of you or leave us. The simplest rules of political action, particularly in the present circumstances through which the Arabs are passing, require that actions be undertaken in accordance with the saying 'what may not be realized in full, must not be totally abandoned", and as well as with patience, making use of suitable circumstances, strengthening internal capabilities and continuously striving through dialogue and practical stands to convince friends of the need for giving and increasing their support to reach the level of American support to Israel. It is worthwhile noting, that the authorities in Egypt have recently begun to make statements which indicate that they are pursuing this path and have focussed attention on the delusion of the peaceful settlement, the deception and procrastination of America, the need for depending on inherent Arab strength, the support of friendly countries and the inclination to use a weapon in the battle. We only hope that there will be more clarity and determination in the pursuit of this sound path.

(5) If we turn to commando activity, we find that

attemps at its isolation and liquidation by the defeatist reactionary forces as well as restrictions on its movements in the countries surrounding Israel are still continuing. However, some commando groups have escalated their violent and challenging operations, such as the operations of the Black September organization in Munich, Bangkok and Khartoum in an effort to move the world conscience and force it to question on the one hand the real reasons behind the tragedy which the Arab people of Palestine are living and to undermine the policy seeking the unjust peaceful settlements on the other. Thirdly these actions were also meant to affirm the capability of the Arab revolution to make additional sacrifices and heroic acts and to esclatate and maintain the resistance movement until victory is achieved.

This is what angers Israel and makes it feel the dangers of the continuity of the Palestinian revolution and its ability to muster the potentialities of the Arab masses and convert them into a long-drawn popular war. For these reasons, Israel carried out its brutal and barbaric raids on the refugee camps in south and north Lebanon and all other places as well as on civilian and military targets in Syria all of which caused the death of hundreds of civilians in addition to considerable material losses. The last treacherous attack of Israeli elements, arranged with American intelligence services, was the one carried out against the leaders of the Palestinian resistance in Beirut.

If Israel aimed through these attacks, to display its strength, challenge the Arab states, terrorize the strugglers, spread despair with regard to the possibility of achieving a victory against it and subsequently to force the Arabs

to accept the fait accompli – the history of our nation and of all living nations affirms that actions similar to those being carried out by the enemy are challenging and arousing to feelings for national vengeance and honour, and for the defense of freedom and just human values. They also constitute the strongest factors for stirring the revolutionary potential inherent in the masses.

Moreover, what happened in the centre of Beirut has clearly exposed the collusion between the reactionary regimes and imperialism and Zionism against the Palestinian resistance in particular and the Arab revolutionary movement in general. When the Lebanese Government failed to liquidate the resistance movement in a manner similar to that undertaken by the Jordanian regime, it adopted the stand of the neutral bystander and some of its establishments provided the necessary facilities for Israeli elements and agents of American intelligence services to carry out this liquidation on its behalf without any regard to the fact that the operation itself violates Lebanese sovereignty and stabs national honour in addition to its being a threat to its destiny and the future of its citizens. However, it seems that the Lebanese authorities in coordination with American and Arab reactionaries and after realizing that the Israeli raid had exposed them and harmed them and at the same time had won for the resistance movement the overwhelming sympathy of the masses, resorted to inciting the commandos and provoking a clash with them with a view to justifying the deployment of the Lebanese Army to strike at them and liquidate them as what happened in Jordan. But what they gained from this was an affirmation of their adherence to American imperialist policy and the agent reactionary states as well as the death

of hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese nationals by the weapons which should have been directed against the Israelis – the enemies of all Arabs. The national and progressive forces in Lebanon and the other Arab countries must realize that any leniency in permitting this new conspiracy against the commandos to pass in Lebanon would mean that imperialism and reaction would in the near future move on to liquidate the progressive forces wherever they may be found in the Arab homeland.

(6) With regard to the tripartite federation, it is not very difficult to see that its progress during the last two years has been slow and hampered and did not fulfil the hopes of those who were enthusiastic for it when it was first announced, and it affirmed what we had expected despite the numerous committees, meetings and decisions that were taken and despite the sincerity and enthusiasm of Colonel Qadhafi for the establishment of a complete union between Libya and Egypt which would be an effective instrument of unity within the federation.

It is perhaps beneficial to add here a few comments as a constructive criticism and out of care for unity. In the first published edition of this chapter, I refererd to the statement by President Numairi in which he placed his conviction in Arab unity on a par with his conviction in African unity. In this reference I intended to give ample warning against the danger to which any step towards unity might be exposed as a result of the ambiguity in understanding its ideology basis and concepts. In fact, shortly after this statement was made, President Numairi abandoned his enthusiasm for the federation of the four and pursued an opposite path, which indicates that his talk

about unity stemmed from political and tactical considerations rather than from a deep-rooted belief and a fixed strategy. Despite the fact that the leaders of Egypt and Libya had played an effective role in his reinstatement to power, after the July 19, 1971 coup d'etat thus enabling him to strike at his adversaries from among the progressive forces in the Sudan, he consequently abandoned them and concentrated his attention on the south and his activities on his regional problems and other issues of the African Continent.

As for nowadays, it is worthwhile pointing to the statements of Colonel Qadhafi with regard to unity from which certain inferences can be made as to his understanding of it which show that his views are greatly ambiguous and incorporate traditional emotionalism which lacks a scientific basis and does not take into account developments in these modern times. During his visit to Tunisia towards the end of last year, Colonel Qadhafi made a speech in which he said: "Unity in these circumstances is taking vengeance for Arab honour more than anything else". He went on to praise Bourguiba and called on him to establish unity between Tunisia and Libya "because the political organizations in the two countries are similar and both regimes have adopted socialism". Bourguiba however rejected his proposal outright and even ridiculed and attacked it, when he replied: "The Presidency of the State did not come to me through a military coup, but as a result of a quarter of a century of struggle... and the new generation which claims leadership lacks the political and cultural thinking and is moreover a generation which must undergo experiences to be able to govern and lead".

Perhaps the insistence of Colonel Qadhafi on amal-

gamating religion with nationalism and his own particular understanding of socialism, unity, political organization and state structure* in addition to his belief that partisanship is traitorous and his continuous attacks on Communism and Communists have forced him to pressure his

* In mid-April 1973, on the occasion of the Prophet's Birthday, Colonel Qadhafi made a speech in which he enumerated four points for the establishment of the revolution and the state which can be summarized as follows:

(1) The provision of all effective laws are to be blocked, and the masses shall establish popular committees which will take the necessary measures and penalties in accordance with the case involved. He said: "we shall not wrong anyone because we are Muslims and govern by Islamic Shari'ah (Law)"

(2) The country must be cleansed of those who are politically sick, and if we find anyone who talks about communism or Marxist ideology or apostasy we shall put him in jail and so with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Liberation Party if they exercise any clandestine activity.

(3) Freedom is for the people and not for their enemies, and the minority must abide by the views of the majority. Arms will be distributed to the masses who believe in the September 1 Revolution and I shall not be concerned if all the masses are converted into a force that smashes and destroys and anyone who is not with us shall remain under our feet.

(4) The September 1 Revolution stems from Islam and I shall tear and burn all the misleading books. "I shall wage a revolution on libraries, universities and educational curricula... and we must burn any misleading thougths and leave the thoughts that stem from the Book of God... and if we implement this, the Libyan people will actually be the first people in the world to carry out a unique revolution in history". He also said "what is available in the Arab homeland is not socialism at all, and socialism has not been presented in a serious scientific manner except after the September 1 Revolution whose bases are found in the Quran." (The Libyan Newspaper Al-Fajr al-Jadid, No. 192, 16 April 1973).

partners – such as the Syrians – to adopt his ideas and concepts.

In the event of their refusal to comply, he would withhold his financial assistance to them or reduce it to the minimum and provide support to those groups that oppose them. Meanwhile, they continued in this policy of partisanship, joining with the Communists in government and in establishing the type of regime they wish, which conforms to their concepts and their interest in remaining in full control of authority. They did not hide their discontent with the stand of the Libyan regime and its attitude towards them. Their complaint is strongest when they notice that he is granting generously tens of millions of dinars to distant non-Arab states, and at the same time he is niggardly in his assistance despite his enthusiasm for the national character of the battle and despite the fact that their state is a member of the tripartite federation, a front-line country and is in dire need for greater support and assistance.

Perhaps the most trying test which the tripartite federation had experienced and which exposed the extent of the weakness of its bonds of unity, lies in the extensive and heavy raid carried out by Israel on Syria a few months ago resulting in the killing of hundreds of people, the destruction of many utilities and installations as well as inflicting heavy material losses estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars. Despite the fact that these raids were carried out more than once, the two other states of the federation did not make a move to come to the assistance of their third partner. Their stand was in no way different from the stand of any other Arab state. Therefore, is there

anything which is clearer and more convincing to the masses with regard to a specific federal project than the practical stands and tangible undertakings made in its interests? In addition, aren't the final results alone, not the good intentions, indicative of the project's final evaluation? In fact the substance of the issue lies in the spontaneous and honest answer to this question: Has the enthusiasm and hope in the tripartite federation increased or has it lessened and why? We sincerely hope that full unity between Egypt and Libya will be realized at the specified time and in the best possible manner, and that those Libyans who expressed the regional inclinations during the funeral of the martyrs of the Libyan airliner, which was shot down by the Israelis, are an ineffective minority. We also hope that the open policy of the members of the tripartite federation towards the progressive Arab states will help strengthen the federation and endow it with the ability to stand fast and resist.

(7) The discussion of the present status of the tripartite federation leads us to mention other projects aimed at unity which have been proposed as a means to overcome this situation and to establish a serious and effective federation capable of halting the deteriorating Arab conditions. At the end of March last year immediately after King Hussein had presented his proposal for the establishment of the "United Arab Kingdom", the revolutionary government in Iraq put forward a project for unity which can be summarized as follows:

— "The Federation of Arab Republics" will be established on a permanent basis providing for a united foreign policy and diplomatic representation; unity of the armed

forces and all matters relating to military affairs and national defense, unity of financial, economic, information, planning and communications affairs in relation to national defense, the needs for steadfastness and liberation in the battle of destiny.

— The Federation will be open to any other Arab state which wishes to join. Its constitution will ensure personal, political and public freedoms for all the masses and the progressive and national organizations.

— The Federation's organizations will be the following: The people's Assembly in which representation will be proportional to the population; the Council of the Republics with equal representation of the member states; The Presidential Council of the Federation which exercises the executive powers; and a Federal Constitutional Court. Decisions will be taken by a majority and not by a unanimous vote. The project stipulated that it aims at satisfying the national needs, at moving forward towards the battle and at warding off the dangers that threaten the Arab nation.

Despite the fact that a high – level delegation, headed by the Vice President of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council had presented the project to the responsible authorities in Syria and Egypt and explained its implications and various aspects affirming that Libya and any other Arab progressive state would not be excluded, it was met with open ears, courteousness and pleasant talk but with no practical response or even a reply to the initiative. To justify such a negative response, there were those who said later that Iraq was not serious in its initiative, when in fact it would have been extremely easy to be able to distinguish between seriousness and test this matter by com-

municating to the Iraqi authorities approval of the initiative and requesting negotiations and discussion which will show the extent of the seriousness of the proposal. Perhaps the written reply from the President of the Iraqi Republic to the Syrian President on October 22, 1972 in answer to the verbal proposals carried by the Syrian Foreign Minister regarding the establishment of unity between Syria and Iraq – a reply which was objective and positive at the same time expressed an honest desire to strengthen the ability to resist and the will to achieve liberation – is the best proof of the serious care given to the question of unity.

In my view, the real reason behind the lack of response to the Iraqi proposal for unity lies in certain past misapprehensions and negative attitudes in addition to internal and regional considerations and a desire for not arousing the fears and doubts of certain Arab governments which provide material support to one state or the other.

Regardless of the reasons or justifications for this lack of response, all we are seeking is a matter of rising to the level of the dangers threatening our nation and a way out of the whirlpool of the present figurative federation as well as adopting effective and serious steps towards unity as quickly as possible as long as there is a dire need for national unity and in view of the fact that time does not wait for or have mercy upon us if we foreget the appropriate opportunity.

(8) As long as we are discussing projects aimed at unity, we might mention quickly a brief summary of the reasons and the status of the unity agreement between North and Southern Yemen which was announced towards the end of October last year. The most important provisions of

the new united Yemeni state must amalgamate the international character of the two Yemens and the united constitution must ensure the personal and political public freedoms of the masses and for all their trade and labour union organizations as well as the gains of the September revolution in the North and the October revolution in the South. Joint technical committees will be established for constitutional and foreign affairs, economic and financial affairs, legislative and judicial affairs and education and information affairs with the proviso that these committees will complete their work for the unification of existing regulations and legislation within a period of one year. The agreement also stated: Total Yemeni unity, in addition to being the hope of every Yemeni, is a basic necessity for consolidating the pillars of independence and building an independent national economy. It is also a national necessity because it enables the Yemen to participate in the struggle of the Arab nation against the imperialist-Zionist alliance and moreover it consistitutes a serious step towards the achievement of the unity of the whole Arab world.

Among the results of the signing of this agreement and the statement issued thereafter with regard to the methods for dealing with the existing problems between the two sides, was the reduction of the existing tension which threatened an outbreak of hostilities between them, to frustrate the reactionary forces, particularly Saudi Arabia and the tribes affiliated to it, and prevent them even for a short while, from escalating their conspiracy against the Popular Democratic Yemen. Despite the fact that the people of both Yemens in particular and the Arab states in general, were satisfied with the agreement and considered it

to be a positive step forward wishing it every success, I believe that the reactionary forces – which were harmed by it in the Yemen as well as Saudi Arabia and imperialism and many other elements controlling the centres of power and authority who are apprehensive and unconvinced with the unity strategy either because of its restricted nature or out of fear for its "revolutionary concepts", – will cause matters to proceed in a maner that will hamper the realization of the unity. All I hope is that events will prove the error of my anticipations.

Having presented a brief resume of events and projects aimed at unity during the last two years we turn to the major question whose answer is the preoccupation and centre of interest of every Arab, namely what is the way and what to do?

(1) In this state at a time when the reactionary, imperialist and Zionist attack is escalating and the state of despair and deterioration is widening, concerted action to realize serious steps towards unity is the natural and most ideal solution to confront this attack and deal with the prevailing circumstances. Such action becomes vitally important if the following is taken into consideration:

The presentation of a large number of proposals for unity without implementation, and the establishment of ineffective federations which are uncapable of overcoming regional and internal considerations and interests, are harmful to the aim of unity, and undermine its raison d'etre. For this reason, the Arab masses and their organized revolutionary vanguards are requested to look upon anyone who tampers with the aim of unity, regardless, as someone who tampers with the masses' most sacred aims and con-

cepts, and consequently to expose, fight and remove such persons from office. The masses must also consider as their infallible yardstick for the evaluation of any step towards unity, the practical results of such a step and nothing else. Also, they should consider that any unity which does not depend on the mobilization of potential and armed struggle for liberation does not go beyond regional considerations as an artificial and fraudulent unity.

There is no doubt that overwhelming verbal pronouncements of the authorities vis-a-vis their activities and their continued disability to implement what they plan and decide, affirms the existence of a fundamental and dangerous malady requiring diagnosis and treatment, appears that there is a dire need to carry out an objective, scientific and comprehensive study of this malady and to search for it everywhere – in the nature of the regimes, in the mentality of the responsible leaderships, in their negative attitudes to the masses and their organized revolutionary vanguards, in their class structure, in their belief in unity and its strategy, in their method and work which lacks any revolutionary, scientific and moral bases, in the regional attitudes, in the shortcomings of education and backwardness in Arab society, in the negative activities of Zionist, imperialist and reactionary organizations which are hostile to the aims of the Arab revolution, and in other fields.

However, the situation cannot wait for this comprehensive study to be completed, and the masses and their organized leaderships must move towards the rejection of and insurrection against the prevailing conditions and to increase the struggle to replace those whose disability has

been established and has proved, in practice, that they are exhausted and that the revolutionary spirit in them has been dissipated.

(2) From experience, it has been established that any step aimed at unity will not be serious or fruitful if it is established from above and in isolation from the struggle of the masses and their organized vanguards. Also if it does not stem from a firm belief in unity and an awareness of its necessity and the requirements for its success. From this, it may be concluded that the progressive popular organizations are urged to exercise the struggle for unity with all the strength they possess. Naturally, their struggle must also encompass fighting imperialism, divisions and backwardness and all kinds of injustice, despotism and exploitation on the basis that they constitute obstacles in the way of unity.

However, the positive results which are expected from popular organizations are connected to a number of factors of which the following are the most important:

(*a*) A knowledge of the laws related to the development of the society within which they are struggling and realizing the status quo with a view to exploiting and making use of what may be available in the best possible way.

(*b*) To operate on the basis of abiding by a scientific ideology, a clear strategy and a firm revolutionary organization.

(*c*) To be able through its actual behaviour and its revolutionary and moral stands to win the confidence of the masses and to have the capacity to bring forth their potential and to direct it in the service of the national aims.

(*d*) To rise to the level of the dangers threatening the Arab nation and to overcome partial disputes and secondary contradictions among themselves. Also to realize the aspirations and demands of the masses which include the unification of their efforts and the consolidation of their forces in a united and common front in each state and at the pan-Arab level.

In this context, we hope that the establishment of the "Arab Joint Front" which includes the Palestinian resistance movement and the progressive parties and organizations in the Arab world as a first step towards the creation of a "National Popular Front" which will be able to play an effective role in undermining the plans of the Zionist-imperialist reactionary alliance and to achieve many national gains and victories.

(3) Up till last year, there were strong and visiting voices advocating the possibility of neutralizing America and winning its friendship and at the same time casting doubt on the friendship of the Soviet Union in the hope of reducing America's hostility towards the Arabs and in inducing it to exercise pressure on Israel to arrive at a just and honourable peaceful settlement! There was also a large number of Arabs who claimed that the basic fault in the Arabs lay in the weakness of their propaganda and because they have not clarified the justness of their cause to the people and countries of the world. In addition, there was a greater number of people who alleged that the application of Arab solidarity would provide an opportunity for cooperation with the Arab reactionary countries enabling them to play an effective role with regard to American

policy as a consequence of reciprocal cooperation among those countries. However, despite the fact that the Arab countries had gone a long way in this direction, America retracted from the Rogers' proposal, undermined any international initiative and chose to impose the fait accompli. It went even further to deceive and misguide the Arabs, to widen its conspiracies against them and to increase its support to Israel. Thus as long as America does not wish to accord the Arabs justice but desires to continue exploiting their petroleum resources and countries' wealth and as long as Israel does not want peace with them but to expand at their expense and to destroy their unity; and since what has been taken by force cannot be restored except through the use of force and since the world community with its various institutions and positive attitude does not have the power to restrain the aggressor – it has become imperative for us to engage in the battle of destiny, the battle for life or death. Moreover, despite the importance of our paying attention to propaganda and diplomatic activities with a view to explain our just cause to international public opinion and win its support, we must not be allowed to cast shadows and doubts as to the priority and necessity for the battle. On the other hand this does not mean that we should enter the fray with emotional and improvised enthusiasm without an accurate calculation of its requirements and adequate preparations.

The battle is a long-draw battle of destiny, bitter and vicious, and there is no alternative for us but to depend on ourselves, to unify our forces, to persist in developing our fighting armies, to mobilize on a scientific basis the masses' potentials and to prepare them for a long-term popular war. In addition, we should strengthen our amica-

ble relations and cooperation with our friends in the Third World and the socialist countries, headed by the Soviet Union, which, through its massive strength, can confront American imperialism at this stage and undermine its conspiracies against us.

(4) The Arab nation possesses a huge potential and capacity which so far remains divided or inherent and it is adequate to ensure steadfastness and victory over imperialism and Israel in the event scientific means are utilized to bring forth, organize and benefit from such potential in the best possible manner.

Hence, while we are preparing for the battle, we must make use of all our forces and expect the worst. We must assume that the summit conferences of the leaders of the major powers will put an end to their disputes and the cold war and will result in peace and understanding between them allowing them to view the problems of other people only through their detente and interests. We must also assume that cirsumstances and interests of our friends do not permit them to offer more than what they have already provided us with, and that Israel, with American support, is able to deal a heavy blow to the Arab armies and that the whole world is unable to provide us with any assistance in times of difficulty and war.

Let us assume all this, and in my opinion it is imperative for us that we prepare oursleves for a kind of popular liberation war – and this does not mean that we should resort to a specific formula or particular experience of this kind of war. What happended in the past – in Spain, China, Yogoslavia, Korea, Algeria, Cuba and Vietnam – may not be useful in our circumstances and present con-

ditions – but a study and knowledge of these conflicts is beneficial for us and throws light on important matters related to this kind of war. I must admit that in proposing these ideas, I feel a great deal of apprehension since it is related to the art of warfare which requires experience and specialization. Therefore, while putting forward in this regard some opinions and suggestions, it does not mean that they are firm and decisive but merely as a form of query, urging those who are specialists and responsible to study them and perhaps they may find in them some benefit.

(*a*) Why aren't tens of thousands of people in every Arab state trained, from an early date, in the use of arms so that they may become not only capable of using weapons but of engaging in guerilla warfare and forming effective vanguards in the popular war of liberation – vanguards who are determined to continue and escalate the fight and to destroy the interests of Israel and its imperialist allies even if it takes decades? Let Israel, in this event, destroy what it wishes as long as its existence on any Arab land will be turned into an unbearable hell and as long as the interests of its allies are in jeopardy.

(*b*) The commandos of the Israeli Defense Army take part in striking at the guerillas and the refugee camps, as well as on military and civilian establishments in the Arab countries. Therefore, why don't members of the Sa'iqah and commando forces of the Arab armies take part in strengthening the Arab guerillas, raising the standards of their training, improving their effectiveness and increasing their numbers so that they may become the vanguards of the liberation war who are capable

of enduring the burdens of the fighting for long periods and of preventing Israel from carrying out its surprise attacks to which it has been used?

(*c*) Why don't the Arabs, despite their present state of affairs, concentrate on developing a heavy armaments industry in any state which fulfils the required conditions to enable them to reduce their dependence on imports of arms and not be viable to various kinds of embargoes and rationing which may be possible under certain international circumstances?

(*d*) Israel has gone a long way in building nuclear reactors for peaceful and military purposes. Why don't the Arabs similarly pay attention to this very important matter? And why don't they build large reactors for peaceful purposes, as India and other countries have done, and which might be used when the need arises, for military purposes? And does not this delay on the part of the Arabs in entering this important field constitute a serious danger to their progress and catching up with modern civilization and subsequently keeps them at the mercy of Zionism and imperialism?

(5) From the fundamental concepts of understanding international relations, interests alone are what affect these relations, govern their level and determine their fate, while feelings of right, justice and other similar sentiments have no mentionable effect in this context. If this is the case, then those states which support Israel, led by America, will not change their hostile policies towards the Arabs unless they realize that their interests are in danger as a result of their continuing in this policy.

At this point the following question comes to mind: What is America's interest in its bias towards Israel and in providing it with political support, as well as money and weapons? The answer is clear and simple and is not puzzling or complicated. It can be briefly said that America has found through experience that its strategic alliance with Zionism and Israel at a time when Arab policy remains unchanged will ensure its interests in the Arab world. No matter what is said about the effect of Zionism on American propaganda machinery and the role of the Jews and their effect on the Presidential elections, American policy will continue to be related to the interests of the state and people and will be drawn in the light of these interests. From all this, it can be surmised that the American government is of the opinion that the question of maintaining its influence in the Arab world, protecting its interests and ensuring its continued imports of Arab oil is of the utmost importance to it now, provided the Arabs continue to remain in their present state of backwardness, divisions and disunity and in finding an adequate way to strike at any popular revolutionary movement which has the capacity to liberate the potential of the masses and to direct them towards unity and freedom from all kinds of imperialist exploitation and control.

Previously, in the fifties, America sought to ensure its interests by involving the Arabs in military alliances, such as the Joint Defense Pact and the Baghdad Pact, as well as by relating the reactionary Arab governments to it politically and economically. But it failed in this when the masses forced their governments to pursue a non-aligned policy and not to become involved in any pacts in which the Arabs have no interest – and when the reactionary

governments were unable to publicly declare their cooperation with the imperialist Western countries. Moreover, the increased flood of revolutionary and unity activity which followed the establishment of unity between Syria and Egypt in 1958 and the success of the July 14 Revolution in Iraq forced the United States and Britain to land their troops in Lebanon and Jordan and to interfere directly with a view to halting the revolutionary tide. America, however, quickly benefited from the errors of Arab policies and the divisions among progressive forces and their setbacks and did not have any need to rely on its military forces which aroused the emotions and national feelings of the Arab masses. Thus America increased its dependence on Israel to play this necessary role since it considered it to be its fundamental base in the Middle East and the Mediterranean basin and a complement to the NATO pact and the Sixth Fleet which is regarded as a reserve force for Israel as President Nixon put it. The interests of Israel and its expansionist ambitions coincided with the imperialist interests, and Israel, in fact, was able to prove its ability to sow dissension and divisions among the Arabs and to deal a major blow to the progressive forces during the June 5 War which somewhat paralyzed and exhausted them and led them to establish closer relations and to cooperate with the reactionary states. Thus the revolutionary tide was halted, and Israel wanted through its repeated aggression to prove to America that it is able to terrorize and restrain its adversaries and at the same time to protect those regimes which are allied to America, such as the Jordanian regime, and to strike at the extremist revolutionary movements, such as the Palestinian resistance movement, in any Arab state.

From this understanding of the aims of the Zionist-

imperialist alliance and its strategy in the Arab world, we can formulate our own aims and strategy.

In addition to what we mentioned earlier with regard to the necessity of undertaking serious steps aimed at unity, supporting and improving commando activities, granting freedom to the masses and their revolutionary vanguards and mobilizing all potential for the battle – the Arabs possess a weapon which at this stage in the history of man has become the most powerful and effective weapon and we should use it to defend ourselves, our honour, our destiny and our future generations. It is the oil weapon – and we own 68 percent of the world's oil reserves. Also, if we realize that the future progress and prosperity of American industry depend on the security of oil supplies – as an irreplaceable basic source of energy and that America will need to import more than half of its oil requirements from the Arab world* we would appreciate the

* The Chairman of the Board of Continental Oil Company has said before a conference that the value of U.S. oil imports will reach $ 30 billion while its exports in the form of goods and services will not exceed $ 66 billion. Also, Senator Henry Jackson – who is a Zionist sympathizer – has said that the anticipated oil revenues of the oil producing countries will reach $ 40 billion in 1980 and that the American economy is liable to be destroyed when the deficit of the U.S. balance of payments reached $ 30,000 million. Reports of American financial experts, published in the American press state: "The deficit in the U.S. balance of payments will amount to between $ 20 – 40 billion between 1980 and 1985 in view of the requirements of the United States to import Arab oil. The energy crisis became so severe leading to the closure of some gas stations, a reduction in certain airline flights and the closure of some schools due to the lack of heating. American oil requirements in 1972 amounted to 500 million tons, of which it imported 230 million tons from the Arab world".

extent of the anxiety and perhaps the panic which dominates the minds of American politicians in case the Arabs cut off or ration oil supplies to the U.S. or create a state of confusion and instability in the area which would prevent the flow of oil in a regular and uninterrupted manner. It is perhaps worthwhile mentioning in this connection the proposals submitted by Iraq to the Joint Arab Defence Council in Cairo on January 27, 1973 on the use of oil and Arab funds as a weapon in the battle. These proposals are as follows:

(1) Notifying the imperialist states supporting Israel that oil supplies to them will be cut off or rationed if their support is not discontinued within a period of three months.

(2) Nationalizing the oil interests of America and other foreign countries which continue to provide support to Israel.

(3) Withdrawing Arab funds from American banks and all countries cooperating with Israel*.

(4) Liquidating the U.S. military bases and those belonging to any other country cooperating with Israel.

(5) In the event of the disapproval of Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Gulf Emirates, because of their political status, they will be requested to reduce oil exports to a level that will enable them to meet their financial obligations to the frontline states and their other commitments related to their development plans within the framework

* The deposits of the Arab states in the U.S. and outside the Arab world amount to about $ 15,000 million, and the Arab countries lose an amount equivalent to $ 1,500 million every time the U.S. dollar is devalued by 10 percent.

of the austerity policy dictated by the nature of the struggle.

(6) The Iraqi government is not asking for unanimous Arab approval of these proposals, only that they should abide by them in case of their approval. Egypt, Syria, Libya and the resistance movement agreed to abide by the proposals. Iraq also expressed its full preparedness to mobilize its military power in any size, time or place decided by the parties engaged in the hostilities and in accordance with a decision taken by those countries regardless of the point of view of the Iraqi Republic.

(7) The parties approving the proposals will draw up a plan for their implementation and will undertake the liquidation of the petroleum interests of the U.S. and those countries supporting Israel through all means available.

At the time Iraq submitted this proposal, those defeatists and doubters thought that Iraq's aim was to secure the requirements of success in its nationalization of its oil industry by asking the other Arab states to cut off or reduce oil production for the sake of the battle. But, in fact, the Iraqi government continued to urge the implementation of this proposal after succeeding in nationalizing the oil industry and its victory over the Western oil agencies on the first of last March. Regardless, certain Arab delegations were satisfied with expressing their support for the projects, in words only, so as not to anger Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates. The projects was subsequently referred to the competent committees for study, and this means, from the practical aspect and from past experience, that the proposal has been shelved on top of other reports to be found someday by some scholar of history who would brush away the dust and read their contents.

Still, the interests of Zionism and imperialism in the Arab world are one and the same, and at the same time the continuity and prosperity of the industry of the U.S. and its allies more and more tied to Arab oil. Moreover, the continued Israeli aggression against and expansion in the Arab states is directly related to American support and arms supplies. The formula therefore is as follows: Arab oil for the U.S., U.S. arms for Israel, and continued weakness and backwardness for the Arabs.

If situations in the political field are to be measured by actual results, the general outcome of Arab and Israeli policies has up till now provided evidence to the U.S. that increasing its support for Israel has not in any way affected its interests.* On the contrary, such support has

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* Statistics compiled by the Secretariat General of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU) show that Arab imports from the U.S. amounted in 1970 to $ 997 million. In 1971 these imports increased by 18 percent while Arab exports to the U.S. decreased by 17 percent, and the balance of trade is in the U.S.'s favour.

A report of the Arab Ministers of Economy submitted by the Arab Economic Council states that the U.S. owns 60 percent of the capital of international companies operating in the Arab world, and that the profits of these companies amounted to $ 2,670 million in 1971.

Other articles by Arab oil experts (Sheikh Abdulla Tariki and Dr. Nicolas Sarkis) on the "participation agreement" between the Gulf countries and the Western oil companies show that this agreement aims at circumventing the nationalization of the oil industry after Iraq had taken this step, at reviving the old concessionary system, at ensuring the foreign companies' control over exploration, drilling, production and transportation operations and at forcing the oil producing countries to sell their equity share to these companies for marketing. It is clear that the agreement was in fact a "Catholic marriage" according to one of the secret newsletters of France's Erap company.

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protected it as well as its allies from among the Arab reactionary regimes.

Therefore, the Arab progressive forces must become aware of this truth: America will not cease to support Israel; the latter will not cease to expand and commit aggression; and the Arabs will not defend their honour and existence if they do not strive to destroy the interests of the U.S. and the states which support Israel and to cut off oil supplies to them in any possible way and to create effective revolutionary movements capable of realizing this aim despite the defeatist governments and no matter how long it takes and regardless of the sacrifices.

Finally all what has been mentioned as an answer to the question posed earlier, namely "what is the way and what to do", will remain far-removed from actual implementation unless we cease to raise deceptive and glittering slogans such as "Arab solidarity" which has led in practice to the removal of the distinction between progressive and reactionary forces, to the attenuation of the class struggle, to the fluidity of revolutionary stands and to the silence about those regimes in cohort with imperialism and Zionism against the aims of the struggling masses and their vanguards.

If we add to all this the statements of the Saudi Minister of Petroleum, Sheikh Yamani, after the conclusion of the agreement indicating Saudi Arabia's desire to invest its capital funds in the U.S. (and not in the Arab homeland which is in dire need for funds) and also concerning the huge deposits of the Arab states in the banks of the imperialist countries, we would realize the extent of the security availab e to protect U.S. interests. Also, perhaps the restoration by the U.S. of its diplomatic relations with some Arab countries, such as North Yemen and the Sudan will increase its reassurance for its interests in the Arab world.

It is sufficient for us to read about the outcome of this "trap" slogan to realize the dangers inherent in it and its negative effects on the progress of the Arab revolution. Perhaps one particular outcome is sufficient to affirm the truth of what we have just said, namely that the rulers of Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates – who are extremely enthusiastic about Arab solidarity and most sincere about Arab brotherhood – are paying very little for the national struggle and a great deal for imperialism and their private petty affairs. Moreover their cordial relations with America, the backbone of imperialism, are improving despite its escalating its conspiracies against the Arab nation and increasing its support to Israel in an unprecedented manner.

Having answered this aforementioned question it is worthwhile to put forward a resume with a view to summarize and digest the most important aspects:

(1) The dangers and challenges that face the Arab nation in this historical phase have become so dangerous that it has become imperative for the progressive forces to take the initiative to overcome its secondary contradictions, unify its struggle in one front in each state and at the pan-Arab level. Also to carry out a radical and total revision of the techniques of activity and struggle in a manner that will make them more revolutionary and scientific and at the same time raise them to a level that conforms to the responsibilities they shoulder.

(2) Giving the masses and their organized revolutionary vanguards freedom of movement and participation and subsequently exposing and resisting those regimes which abrogate the role of the masses, impose a guardianship over them and distort their will.

(3) Supporting and developing guerilla activity with all available means because it represents the will to resist and constitutes the forefront of the vanguards of the Arab revolution who believe in the armed struggle as a way to liberation and victory.

(4) Exercising the struggle for unity to achieve steps aimed at an effective fighting unity with the masses as its base, liberation its concepts and socialist democracy its essence.

(5) Reactionaries and progressives are contradictory and cannot possibly meet under the slogan of Arab solidarity unless under a clear charter and the leadership of progressive forces. The Arab struggling masses and their progressive forces must start their struggle considering the reaction inimical to the aims of the Arab revolution is on the same side of imperialism and Zionism.

(6) Establishing effective revolutionary organizations to strike at U.S. interests in any possible way and at any time and any place.

(7) Paying special attention to create an awareness among the masses on the importance of using Arab funds and oil as a weapon in the struggle – so that this may become as soon as possible a slogan which can be implemented and cannot be ignored by the reactionary regimes and whereby the masses are not prevented from applying it at the appropriate time.

(8) Expanding the framework of cooperation with the socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union in order to implement the slogan "we befriend those who befriend us and we are inimical to our enemies",

(9) Strengthening and developing cooperation with the developing countries, the non-aligned states and all the progressive forces and liberation movements throughout the world.

CHAPTER SIX*

UNITY: PRESENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

In contemporary Arab history, there were many trials and attemps at unity, the most important of which was the shortlived unity between Syria and Egypt in 1958 which brought to the Arab masses great hopes. Then there was the tripartite union between Syria, Egypt and Iraq in 1963 which, had it seen the light in the manner that those who believed had wanted, the Arabs would not have been in the state they are in nowadays, a state of humiliation because of the defeat of the June War, and the subsequent continuation of the aggression and challenge by Israel and imperialism. At the moment we are living the experiment of the tripartite federation between Egypt, Syria and Libya and the difficult process of the proposed comprehensive unity between Libya and Egypt. Since this federation came into being under the circumstances of defeat and deterioration it started as a hope, and despite the fact that two years have elapsed since its inception it has remained weak and regretfully it is on the way of becoming dormant** because of the ruling petit bourgeoisie logic, the adherence

* This chapter was written towards the end of 1973 and was published in a book entitled "Hawl al-Wihdah al-'Arabiyah" (About Arab Unity) – 2nd edition.

** An editorial in the Libyan newspaper *al-Fajr, al-Gadid.*

to regional conditions and interests and the mentality of hesitation and fear with regard to the pursuit of serious steps aimed at unity. It is also worthwhile pointing out to the clumsy, if not paralytic, attempt at the establishment of a unity between North and South Yemen. Also we can mention the proposal made by Iraq in 1972 for the establishment of a union among Syria, Egypt and Iraq as well as any other progressive Arab state. This proposal did not receive the necessary response and remained shelved. As I have mentioned these proposals earlier and there is no scope at this point to go into the details of and to analyze their experiences and attemps. We will restrict ourselves to certain general opinions and observations with regard to the obstacles that stand in the way of unity, the prevailing circumstances and the basic conditions which are needed for its success, all from the progress and experiences of unity and what accompanied it whether success or retrogression, hopes or failure and end up by answering the following question: Where are we vis-à-vis unity at this stage and is it on the upward or downward or static trend?

However, it is appropriate before answering this question to point out that what we shall mention here as observations and results are derived from living these experiences and attemps and from practice and practical experience rather than deriving them from theoretical readings or mere mental analysis. This in our opinion makes these observations more important and beneficial.

(1) The continuation of official Arab action by way of the Arab League – despite its immense failure to express the unity ambitions of the masses and its inability during the last 30 years to develop in a manner that would pave

the way for and serve the interest of unity – is an indication of how much the Arab rulers can undertake. It is not expected that they should do more as long as the League's formats and the Arab summit and solidarity conferences which are devoid of any progressive connotation continue to command their respect and attention.

They are incapable of realizing any radical steps towards unity since actual events have affirmed that as a result of class composition, their activities are based on regional concepts and are carried out with a wavering middle-of-the-road mentality, far removed from the revolutionary spirit needed to achieve unity as a revolutionary aim. For this reason it is illogical for us to ask them for what they do not possess and to heap on them what they cannot endure. We must therefore look towards those forces with the revolutionary spirit and the ability to shoulder the burdens of unity. We will not be wrong or misled if we consider the struggling masses and their revolutionary vanguards as the forces which are competent to wage the struggle for unity till the very end, considering that it is they who have the real interest in unity. We can also add that if Zionism, imperialism and the bourgeois affiliated to them as well as the opportunist and agent elements who are hostile to the aims of the Arab revolution are inimical to Arab unity out of an awareness and determination, the conditions of ignorance, illiteracy and political and ideological backwardness are an infertile ground for the growth and flourishing of unity. Meanwhile when the petit bourgeoisie are in power they constitute, because of their incompetence and mentality, a real obstacle in the way of unity although they may not necessarrily be against it both emotionally and consciously.

(2) The aforementioned statement leads us to explain what we mean by the dependence on the masses and benefiting from them so that such statements do not remain as mere glittering words without a definite meaning. When we decide that the masses are inclined towards unity we should carefully investigate the motives behind and realities of such inclinations – whether they are of a sustained permanent nature or merely emotional manifestations that come to the fore as a reaction to major national events. Also how to organize and develop such inclinations so that they become an effective force and a basic guarantee for protecting any step towards unity and to impart to them a certain immunity against the misleading and deceptive methods exercized by the propaganda and information machinery. It is true that the masses are an inexhaustible source of struggling power and revolutionary capacity except that such power and capacity could remain dormant and uneffective unless there are organized revolutionary leaderships.

The theoretical relationship between the masses and their organized revolutionary vanguards leads us to point out to the conditions that these vanguards must fulfil. To be able to win the support of the masses and utilize their capacity and leadership in a manner directed towards unity, these vanguards must have a clear vision – that is a revolutionary scientific ideology as well as a well-knit and specific organization – based on the toiling classes which are qualified to continue the struggle till the very end – and led by a leadership enjoying high-level mental and moral standards and an ability to understand realities and to find the best practical and scientific methods for change. In other words, the masses are an ineffective force without

an aware and struggling leadership, that is, without an effective ideological revolutionary organization that is able to rise to the level of its aims, an organization in which both the leadership and the base are endowed with considerable feelings of responsibility, an awareness of the particular stage and its requirements, an absolute faith in the justice of their aims and an unswerving determination to continue the struggle for these aims.

Thus revolutionary and aware leaderships – from the point of view of political parties, and also political parties from the point of view of the masses, have a major and effective role in creating an awareness among the masses and developing and revolutionizing their potential. Therefore, we consider hostility towards progressive political parties as a grave error or stemming from suspicious objectives and to say the least such hostility is aimed at hampering the role of the masses and subsequently paving the way for bureaucratic and dictatorical practices in the affairs of government. As for the question of the faults and deficiencies in the activities of these parties these must not be considered as a justification for fighting them or abolishing them by decisions enacted from above as is the usual practice of the revolutionary military regimes. Only these faults and deficiencies must be fought and at the same time the positive aspects in the activities of the parties must be strengthened to enable them to fulfil their duties and play their role in creating an awareness among and directing the masses.

To be fair in this context we must say that the majority of the existing popular leaderships are not in a position which is equitable to the vastness of the aims and the requirements of the stage. We find that they are a set stage

for repeated divisions and continued competition and which allows secondary contradictions to prevail over what is basic and fundamental, thereby weakening the confidence of the masses in them especially after reaching a stage of revolutionary exhaustion. Perhaps this points out to the need to surpass these leaderships and to find alternatives to them which may be more capable in attracting the masses and their leaderships.

(3) Since we discussed the necessity for revolutionary organization in the realization of unity it is perhaps useful to mention a certain concept which at times is publicized and finds support, namely, that the realization of unity requires the establishment of a single party for unity or one Arab movement encompassing the whole Arab nation and including all the struggling forces so as to avoid continued disputes and damaging party contradictions. There is no doubt that this concept may be theoretically correct and attractive and if it is possible to put it into practice will constitute the best possible instrument to achieve unity. However, by taking a closer look and analyzing it in detail it will be seen that it is in fact not practical and lies within the framework of an aspiration which is far removed from realities and objectivity. The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party has spent 30 years trying to win over the Arab masses and has not been able to realize this concept and to become the strongest party in the whole of the Arab states. Also, the repeated attempts undertaken by many, through the encouragement of Abdel Nasser and his vast organizations, to realize a unified Arab movement ended up in failure. Not only this, but if we take a close look at the concept from the various attempts at its application within a narrower regional framework – which is the easier framework –

we find that these have also failed since the Socialist Unions in each of Egypt, Libya and the Sudan have been unable to win over the masses and their leaderships because they were instituted by decisions from above, and they did not have in their formation, concepts, leadership and basis, the conditions necessary for the establishment of a struggling revolutionary organization along the lines we have mentioned earlier. This then poses the question: What are the best possible ways and means to achieve unity within the conditions of the present Arab realities? The answer briefly and within the limits of our conclusions and beliefs is in the establishment of a strong progressive front to include all the Arab organizations and parties which are progressive and inclined towards unity, work in accordance with a well-studied charter that defines the common objectives and unified action, struggle to remove the obstacles in the path of unity and strengthen the factors and positive potentials that lead to its realization.

While we appreciate the many difficulties and serious obstacles which stand in the way of implementing this proposal, such as sensitivities, differences of opinion among the progressive parties with varying degrees of responsibility and in view of the fact that most of them, because of the weakness of their composition and leadership, do not have the freedom of action and activity in isolation from the influence of the regime in the country where such action and activity are taking place. Again while appreciating these conditions as well as other negative factors we believe that they are positive factors that could induce the progressive forces to work together in a common front.

In the forefront of these positive factors is the escalating challenge to these forces by the Zionist-imperialist-

reactionary alliance, the rising awareness and feeling of responsibility among the masses and their organized vanguards and the closing of the gap that separated the progressive forces in their political and strategic aims. Perhaps the meeting of these forces and their joint action in the "Arab Joint Front" for the support of the Palestinian movement – despite the fact that all this has its weaknesses and shortcomings – provides evidence of the possibility of joint action between these progressive forces. In addition there is the rise of national progressive fronts in certain Arab states and many other countries of the world which had gone through circumstances and conditions similar to those prevailing in the Arab world at present.

(4) After discussing the role of the masses and their revolutionary vanguards in the building up of unity and in protecting it we can now explain the need for understanding the existing realities in every state and not surpassing it because such understanding bears a direct relationship to the establishments of unity on a sound basis. What we mean is to recognize the forces that are for and against unity and to discover the obstacles that stand in its way which are inherent in the thinking of the rulers and their class composition, in the past historical contradictions – individual, tribal and mythological beliefs – and in the role of Zionism, Israel, imperialism and reaction together with a scientific knowledge of the laws of development as well as the positive and negative aspects of the political, social and economic realities. Such knowledge in itself is a source of strength as August Comte had said. Moreover, it is not possible to arrive at a sound position without such knowledge. For example, the unity between Syria and Egypt in 1958 was established mainly

on the basis of enthusiasm, belief and emotional drive with little scientific planning and field study of the political, social and economic realities in each of the two countries. Thus, there was a lack of balance between the scientific knowledge of the existing realities and their effects and complications, and the national emotion towards unity and the need for its establishment.

In other words, the enthusiasm for and belief in unity had overcome any objective thinking aimed at its protection and development. Perhaps our concern and benevolence for unity are the reasons that prevent us from going over its serious obstacles and make us defend our reason, objectivity and planning while avoiding, in urging its establishment, resort to emotional and rhetoric techniques. At this point we must go on to say: We must differentiate very clearly between the knowlegde of realities, the need to understand them and the determination to change them and the question of pausing before such realities, fearing the difficulties and complications arising therefrom and subsequently surrendering to them. Anyone who is an advocate of unity will, because of his appreciation of the most difficult obstacles find a way to overcome them through persistence and struggle. On the other hand, those who do not believe in unity will make out of the simplest obstacle an excuse for retreat and neglect. In this context it must be pointed out that some of the enemies of unity – out of their cunning and deception – if they demand that studies should be undertaken and that unity should not be rushed, they are merely trying to postpone or avoid it; and if they demand additional reasoning and less emotionalism they are only trying to procrastinate and delay. Thus they are fighting it under the guise of showing con-

cern to it and harming it by pretending to defend it.

When we criticize the emotional technique in striving to achieve unity we do not mean that the masses should work in this field without reaction or emotion since these latter manifestations express in one way or another the masses' enthusiasm and great attachment to unity. However, to ensure that the emotions and reactions of the masses are converted into an effective and constructive force in building and protecting unity, an explanation must be made of its difficulties, concepts, conditions for its success, the reasons for its setbacks in previous experiences and the scientific and practical formats necessary for its establishment within the present circumstances and realities.

One criticism that may be levelled against the Ba'th Party lies in the fact that prior to the unity of Egypt and Syria in 1958 and the tripartite federation agreement between Syria, Egypt and Iraq in 1963, it undertook a massive emotional mobilization of the masses without any explanation or classification – at the same level as that of the mobilization – of the requirements for unity, its factors and guarantees. Every time the Party participated in unity negotiations it did not have on hand any clear constitutional format or scientific study on the subject. Thus the living experience affirms that if determining and adopting worthwhile slogans that express the aims of any particular stage, it is yet more important that the concepts of these slogans are clarified in a scientific manner based on studies and serious research together with a knowledge of the possibility of their implementation successfully.

(5) These conclusions lead us to comment on the concept of unity and its importance in protecting it and safeguarding its continuity. If we review the unity experiments from the fifties up till the present time and arrive at conclusions with regard to the points of weakness and shortcomings of its constitution as well as the elements of failure in its progress, we will find that the lack of the concept of socialist democracy is in the forefront of these elements. To be more precise in what we have said we will briefly explain what we mean by the concept of socialist democracy as follows:

The required democracy within the framework of unity means giving the masses and their revolutionary vanguards freedom of action and activity and giving enough scope for the development of their inherent huge potential through practicing actual struggle and living experience. It also means refusing to follow any of the pursuits of the autocratic and dictatorial regimes, fighting the existing techniques based on suppression, terrorism and domination and at the same time preventing bureaucracy, the machinery of suppression and the police from controlling the affairs of state and the fate of the people.

Democracy, in view of its relation to socialism and the masses, does not mean granting economic freedom as it is understood by the capitalist Western regimes, but the realization of social justice in a manner that prohibits the exploitation of man by his brother man, or the economic and subsequent political control and domination of the rich minority over the poor majority in the name of freedom and democracy. In other words: There is no democracy with individualism, bureacracy and the abrogation of the role of the masses.

As regards socialism, it means the abolishment of feudalism and capitalism as well as all forms of exploitation. It also involves comprehensive scientific planning, national ownership of the means of production and striving to provide equality and the elimination of class distinctions. Also realizing social and economic justice, ensuring the application of equal opportunities and the right to work under suitable conditions for every citizen, considering work as the primary source of livelihood and finally freeing the individual from the problems of unemployment, poverty, ignorance and disease. However, in my opinion, this kind of desired socialism will not bear fruit in the best possible manner unless it is realized within the framework of Arab unity, at the pan-Arab level, and not at the regional level, where there is available a vast potential for the development of the economy, raw materials, science and technology, heavy industry, and large-scale market outlets in addition to extensive manpower and surplus capital. Also here is a great potential to confront the international monopolies, economic pressure of the major powers and to dispense with large loans that may well lead to a kind of economic dependence and subsequently to a political dependence of the lending states.

Thus we notice from the above and as we have mentioned in Chapter Three that there is a close relationship between unity, freedom and socialism and that the interrelation of these three aims is so strong that it is difficult to separate one from the other and all three appear to be three sides to the same aim, namely, the desired comprehensive renaissance of the Arab nation.

To summarize what we are trying to explain with regard to the concept of unity we can state the following:

— Any step toward socialism at the regional level will remain limited and incomplete and will lose its importance if it becomes an alternative to unity or a justification to its non-fulfilment or a preoccupation in its stead.

— Also, socialism without a popular democracy will be changed into a kind of Fascism or bureaucratic rule and thus detract the masses' enthusiasm and support both of which are the important pillars for its success and continuity.

— As for political democracy, as it stands in certain Arab states, it will continue to be fraud and incapable of providing the suitable atmosphere to make use of the inherent talents and potentialities and to bring out the dormant drive of the masses for struggle and revolution, if it is unaccompanied by a social democracy, that is socialism.

Therefore we can deduce from the above that unity without its democratic and socialist concept can be likened to a dead tree whose sap – which gave it the elements of life and growth – has completely dried up.

(6) In this paragraph we will deal with the danger arising from the establishment of various exemplary forms of unity whose outside appearance mask their inner substance and which subsequently aim at spreading despair, weariness and disappointment. In this respect, the responsibility falls in the first place on the rulers who have established it, implemented it and chosen its format. In this regard I recall a statement attributed to Alexander II of Russia about the peasants when he said: "We must liberate the peasants from above so that they may not be

liberated from below." Does not this kind of thinking apply to what most of the Arab rulers want and do when they undertake, or are forced to undertake, any step towards unity? In fact, if we set aside incentives and intentions and look at the practical results which are the best yardstick we will find that the past experiences of unity express the will of the rulers and their regional concepts and that they conform to their interests in maintaining their rule within the framework of their understanding and the limits of their ambitions. At the same time, we will find that these experiences do not embody the masses' demands and do not conform to their aspirations. It is from this that we insist, as we have said earlier, that any step towards unity is doomed to failure if it is dictated from above in artificial forms and if it is isolated from the masses and their revolutionary vanguards.

Perhaps the most dangerous negative effects on the concept of unity, its struggle and the possibility of its application are those stemming from repeated setbacks and failures in its experiments or from aborting it and converting it into a mere appearance, empty of its concepts and substance. It is thus that despair finds its way into the hearts of people and faith in the usefulness and possible application of unity is destroyed. There is nothing more difficult for a human being than to build up a hope for a particular aim and to rejoice at its achievement only to find it on its way to disappearing. It is at this point that he bemoans his luck and tries to comfort himself with patience and control. His enthusiasm will cool and he will become disinterested until the revolutionary vanguards move him to the struggle once more and instigate him to defend the aims that were falsified and which to

him if seriously applied are a way to salvation. Thus the organized forces must persist in explaining the truth so that the masses will continue to be aware of the methods of falsification and deception and will be able to understand and undermine them. Subsequently, they will be prepared to resume the struggle in an effort to realize steps aimed at real unity regardless of the cost or of the sacrifice.

(7) Discussing the affairs of unity has many aspects and we cannot go into the details of its principle problems in the few pages available in this book. However, it is perhaps beneficial to explain and discuss some of the wrong concepts about unity such as the statements that say that its success requires similar objective economic and social circumstances in every Arab state, or that its realization necessarily depends on the assumption of power by the ruling class, or that it is subject to the liberation of the Arabs from imperialist control and influence or that there should be appropriate Arab and international circumstances, or even the reverse, that it must be realized because of the unity of language and historical bonds and common interests as if that is all there is to achieve it – in isolation from the will for the struggle as well as planning and awareness.

Finally, we would like to answer the following question: What is the fate of unity and what is its future? Is it growing and on the upward trend or is it dormant and on the downward trend?

From all that appears on the surface, there are indications of pessimism and negativism. However, a careful examination of the situation and going beyond external appearances shows in my opinion scope for optimism. We

can perhaps affirm this by pointing to a number of facts the most important of which are the following:

(*a*) The rulers who set up figurative federations between their respective countries and subsequently fill the world with praise for the federation claiming that it is the hope that realizes for the nation the much-desired glory and strength. Such rulers, who aim at such action to pass the time and incite the masses, forget that through this, their method, they are destroying the faith of the masses in them and that they are leading the masses to opposition and to express their indignation whenever possible.

Despite the fact that such falsification and deception harm the cause of unity, and at the same time sow the seeds of indignation which are nursed by the people through struggle and sacrifice to enable them to overthrow the rulers who have falsified their aims. We are certain that the day is not far in which the rulers will be completely bared and they will not be able to pursue their falsification and their deception of the masses and subsequently will fall.

(*b*) Since challenge as Toynbee has said, is the most important incentive for progress, what Zionism and imperialism have meted out to our Arab nation in the form of conspiracies and challenge has not been known in modern history. The establishment of Israel as an alien and artificial entity in the Arab homeland was aimed at expansion, aggression and the break up of Arab unity in addition to sowing the seeds of dissension among them, terrorizing and depleting their potential and maintaining them in a

state of backwardness and weakness that will enable the Zionist-imperialist alliance to control them and exploit their resources. Despite the ugly military defeats which the Arabs had sustained in their wars with the Zionist entity for the last thirty years, these wars of destiny, which involved failures and victories and were accompanied with setbacks and victories, were among the most important factors to kindle nationalist feelings among the Arabs and in deepening and expanding the struggle. The Arabs after the defeat of the June War and because of it, reached a stage of division, deterioration and retrogression which made many, inside and outside the Arab world, think that they will never rise again and that the much-desired unity among them had been transformed into a mirage and some kind of dream.

However, the October 1973 war has expelled these assumptions when it showed that the flames of the war had melted away the differences and instigated the disputant rulers to participate in the battle. The war also affirmed that the Arab masses – from the Gulf to the Atlantic – had loved Arab unity with all their feelings and emotions and expressed their great adherence to it.

(*c*) If we assume that imperialism and the Arab reactionary regimes have been able to "tame" the Arab progressive regimes, which are exhausted, and to force them to go along with them either by pressure and threats or money and promises and subsequently to force them to accept a peaceful settlement with the Zionist entity. Such a settlement, if concluded, will not erase the last thirty years which were full of the tragedies and disasters committed by the Zionist entity and it will not prevent the

Zionists from practicing methods of aggression and challenge in the future. Moreover, any peaceful settlement will carry with it injustice and unfairness to the Arabs as long as such a settlement is based on the U.N Security Council Resolution No. 242, which was the fruit of the June defeat, affirms the recognition of Israel and ignores the substance of the Palestinian problem by considering it as a problem of refugees.

No matter what the circumstances and justifications for this settlement, it will only add further new complications to the historical struggle between Zionism and imperialism on the one side and the Arab nation on the other. In addition, the vagrant contradiction between the interests and aims of the Arab and Zionist existence will further inflame the factors of the struggle between them while at the same time it will be the most important incentive to pursue the path of Arab unity.

(*d*) When we notice that many political forces at the popular and official levels have abandoned their hostility to unity willy-nilly and have expressed their interest in it; and when we notice that those rulers who are most attached to regional conditions do not dare these days to belittle unity but claim that they are concerned about it, we can understand from all that that unity has become a popular demand and an aim that will not be ignored. Any aim which reaches this level and becomes the centre of interest of the masses and their emotions; and when it becomes a synonym to the meanings of strength and honour or will lead to them, then it will be achieved no matter how long it takes and regardless of the cost. In addition, the masses in time will acquire an increased awareness and resistance to believing slogans put forward

by the rulers. The organized vanguards of the masses will also become capable of analyzing the truth of glittering slogans and the objectives of attractive statements made by the politicians and those who claim to advocate unity.

In this respect we must warn against statements which are full of assurances and attractions and at the same time we must strengthen the pursuit and double the efforts and the struggle, because unity will not be realized except at the hands of those who believe in it and struggle for it.

(*e*) In this age – the age of the atom and vast technological progress – where great advances have been made in the means of communications and the exchange of influences among the people and countries of the world, and with the increased opportunities of competition among the advanced powerful states – the gap between these states and the weaker backward states becomes more evident each day. The road before the smaller nations is nearly closed in the event they desire to catch up with the strong civilized countries. Moreover, certain states as those in Europe, which were not long ago considered to be major powers – such as France, Britain and Federal Germany - are beginning to realize that they are unable to maintain their political, economic and military strength and to compete with and stand fast against the major forces of the world such as the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. at present and China in the future, unless they develop the European Common Market and realize some form of political unity among them. This state of affairs is no longer a subject of statements and ambitions but has evolved into the undertaking of concrete steps in this direction.

Moreover, the African nations with their different

interests and origins have gone a long way in developing the Organization of African Unity in a manner that best serves their appreciation of developments aimed at the formation of strong federations of blocs among peoples with common interests.

From the aforementioned, we can say that the Arab struggle for Arab unity does not only conform to the concept of development in this age but is a vital and imperative necessity so long as they have no alternative to liberation, development and catching up with civilization and progress and there is no scope for them to rise to the standards of the civilized nations, except through the realization of their unity. In my opinion, this truth, which becomes clearer in the minds of the Arabs with the passage of time, will have a considerable effect in bringing unity closer to its realization.

(*f*) It has often been said that the main purpose for the establishment of Israel in the heart of the Arab homeland is to ruin unity and prevent its realization, and that Israel, which is supported by Zionism and imperialism, possesses vast means and capabilities for this purpose. In this connection, we must mention the following:

(1) Why should we assume that this state of division in the Arab world will last forever, and at the same time why should we assume that the state of harmony in Israel will last until the day of atonement? And who said that the presently cohesive Israeli society because of its fear on the one hand and the strength of Zionist propaganda on the other will continue to be cohesive in the future after its fears have been mostly defrayed and it will have new aims and needs which were previously kept away from it?

Such assumptions do not lend themselves to reason nor to the history of nations and peoples. Moreover, some results of the October war have proved the truth of what we have just said, where the Arabs were drawn towards unity and certain manifestations of divisions have appeared within Israel. Had the fighting continued for a while longer and had it not been aborted by some Arab rulers, there would have appeared graver and more far-reaching effects. If we go back to the expectations and anticipations of some of the world's leading politicians and thinkers, such as De Gaulle, Toynbee, Deutscher, Jacques Berc and others who have a far-reaching insight, we will find that there is a positive optimism for the Arabs and a black future for Israel.

(2) Who said that the strength of the Zionist and imperialist propaganda machinery is able to hide the facts and realize its objectives in deceiving and misleading every age and until the end of time? Was not world public opinion, prior to June, on Israel's side and has it not changed these days and particularly after the October war to the side of the Arabs because the truth about the Zionist-imperialist aggressive existence had become clear? Doesn't this change in world public opinion have a weakening effect on Israel and strengthening effect on the Arabs?

Also, who said that America will continue forever to give massive support to Israel as a blind man who cannot see his way or a fool who doesn't realize his interest and does not care about the indignation and anger of the world?

Did not France and Britain. which played this role in the first half of this century subsequently withdraw from it when they realized their interest in such withdrawal?

(3) The economic, human and scientific resources in Israel are being exploited to the full extent and the available opportunities for increasing them is very little except for the immigration and contributions which also must cease. On the other hand the opposite is true with the Arabs where we notice that the vast economic and human resources are still inherent and unexploited, and that there is a great possibility of doubling them. The time element plays its role in increasing it as the sphere of these educated and specialized Arabs is expanded and as they progress in their planning and development, their exploitation of their huge resources and particularly their oil resources. Therefore, how can Israel be victorious over the Arabs and how can it play havoc with their unity and hamper their awakening?

In view of these facts we can say with great confidence and without being personally optimistic or having a divine belief that Arab unity is coming no doubt – sooner or later.